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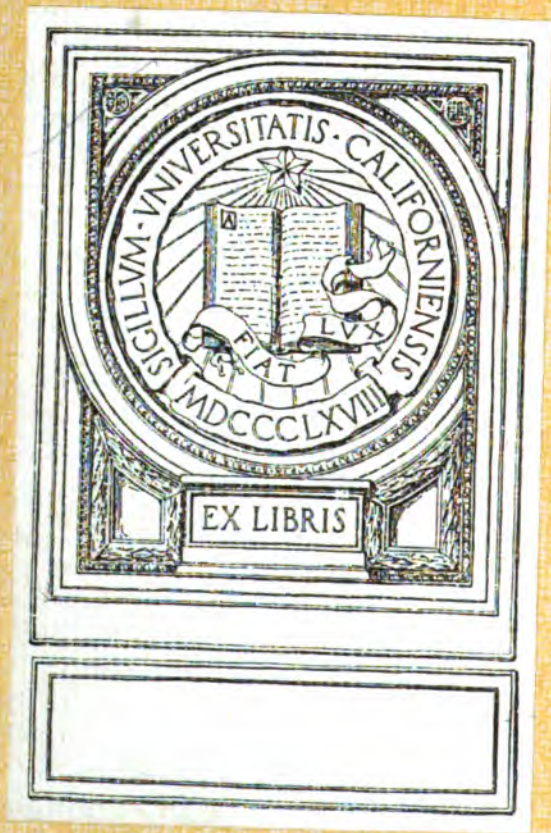
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# THE SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA.

BY  
SIR ARTHUR HELPS



JOHN LANE  
LONDON & NEW YORK  
1900





importance of church  
culture to nations  
in Africa and Asia



# THE SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA





# THE SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA

AND ITS RELATION TO THE HISTORY  
OF SLAVERY AND TO THE GOVERNMENT  
OF COLONIES

BY  
SIR ARTHUR HELPS

A NEW EDITION  
EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
MAPS, AND NOTES BY  
M. OPPENHEIM

IN FOUR VOLUMES



JOHN LANE  
LONDON AND NEW YORK  
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1911

**GENERAL**



## INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESENT EDITION

SO far as the personal element is concerned, brevity must always be the chief merit of an Introduction to a reprint of a work by a dead writer, because an Editor can never entirely enter into the author's mind, and, in dilating on his views, is more likely to distort than to represent them. In this case, especially, there is little to say about *The Spanish Conquest in America*, since the reading world has long shown its appreciation of the work by seeking it at an enhanced price, a final award more practical than any set eulogy. One of the foremost of living American historians has described it as "a book that it does the soul good to read"; and whether the reader agrees, or disagrees, with some of the author's views, he will at least determine that it is the work of a scholar and a Christian gentleman—two qualifications not always united in the historian—and therefore a formative influence, as all such books are, in the growth of the moral forces silently directing humanity towards higher ideals. Inevitably, in a history dealing with many races and many nations, extending over centuries of time, and covering a field including both the old and new worlds, there must be divers matters both in facts and conclusions in which the author will lay himself open to criticism. So far as relates to facts the Editor has not found that the lapse of upwards of forty years, and the

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accretion of material become available since Sir Arthur Helps wrote, have rendered many amendments necessary, for it will be seen that the added notes to this edition are mostly in the nature of expansions rather than of corrections. And if the author had himself prepared another edition, he would have seen, probably, little to alter in his general conclusions, based on stated grounds, carefully thought out, and the outcome of many years of study. As there can be no such thing as uniformity in opinion, doubtless he expected dissent from his views in more or less important details, for it is hardly a subject that any one, even without possessing especial knowledge, will read through and find himself in accord in all points with the author. That criticism which is progress towards final truth is always valuable; for another kind of criticism Sir Arthur Helps had a clear and judicious contempt.<sup>1</sup> He gave the world of his best, and the writer who gives that does not lightly change manner or matter at the bidding of superficial fault-finding, or in compliance with brand-new theory.

In preparing this edition the Editor has not felt himself at liberty to interfere with the text as left by the author, except in the correction of a few obvious misprints or doubtful forms of Spanish expressions. But the original notes having been mostly printed in the language—Spanish, Latin, French, or Italian—of the writer quoted, and being therefore useless to many readers, are now translated, unless Sir Arthur Helps has himself translated them in his narrative, in which

<sup>1</sup> "You often find that a long criticism upon a man or his work is but a demand that he should be somebody else and his work somebody else's work."—Vol. i, p. 194.

case only the authority is given in the footnote. Of course all the notes by Sir Arthur Helps himself have been retained, and those by the present Editor are enclosed within square brackets.

Over the pillars, on each side of the doorway, of Francisco de Montejo's sixteenth-century house at Merida (Yucatan), are the figures of two armed Spaniards trampling on prostrate Indians. Sir Arthur Helps, and modern Spanish writers, tell us that the dominant note of Spanish conquest was religious, "on this basis, and from this point of departure, is unfolded the continuous policy of Spain. These clear, simple, noble, and elevated ideas have been the inspiration of all our Indian legislation."<sup>1</sup> The primary purpose of history is neither to praise nor to condemn, but to explain, and the reader will ask himself where is here to be found the missing middle term between the extremes of action and theory thus indicated; why, if the intentions and legislation were so excellent, the consequences were so disastrous; why, if Spanish statesmen were animated by such lofty ideals, the Spanish settlers played the part of devils among the helpless Indians, resulting in the death and physical and mental torture of millions of human beings, representing a sum of human misery to which there is nothing comparable in history except, perhaps, that long tragedy of fire and sword epitomized as the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Yet the dealings of the Spaniards with the native races only

<sup>1</sup> M. BLANCO HERRERO, *Política de España en Ultramar*, Madrid, 1888, p. 37.

differed in degree, but not in kind, from that of all civilized races with aborigines unfortunate enough to be discovered. There are sufficient indications to-day of what, but for the strong hand of home governments, would be the fate of African natives at the mercy of European adventurers, and the African is a sturdy fighter. In the sixteenth century no government was strong outside its capital, and most of the American races were unwarlike by nature and practically unarmed. Sir Arthur Helps writes, "in order that any amelioration might take place in the condition of the Indians it was necessary for three things to be favourable thereto—namely, the disposition of the Spanish Court, the disposition of the rulers in the Indies to whom authority had been delegated, and, thirdly, some feasibility in the circumstances of the country to which the law was to apply," and although this was written with particular reference to an order of 1530, the remarks are as applicable to the first years of discovery in the reign of the Catholic Kings as to the time of Charles V. If we proceed a step farther and inquire why the local authorities were sometimes unwilling, and sometimes unable, to carry out their orders, there seem to be two principal reasons: firstly, that the administrative officials were usually men of inferior capacity, and, secondly, that they had no disciplined royal force at command. It will appear to the reader of the *Spanish Conquest* that in but few instances were the colonial governors and their subordinates of more than mediocre ability, scarcely equal to the routine of settled and long-established government, quite unequal to the novel and difficult conditions in which they were placed. Frequently they were less than mediocre, and, moreover, were sometimes

flagrantly dishonest and did not hesitate to sacrifice their own countrymen in order to secure a profit. If two Dominican monks were martyred that the magistrates of Española might sell kidnapped Indians, we may guess what happened in cases less likely to attract attention.<sup>1</sup> Yet in Spain Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles V., were served by the ablest statesmen of the time, but these men were not employed across the Atlantic because there was more than sufficient work for them at home, and the Indies were always subsidiary to Spanish ambitions in Europe. When an able man like Pedro de la Gasca was sent to America for an especial purpose, he stands out as of transcendent capacity when opposed to the crude simplicities of the Pizarros and their like; but de la Gasca was only one of many equally capable servants of Charles V., and held no particular intellectual rank among them. The difference was that the ordinary colonial official was much below the Spanish home standard.

Even more fatal, possibly, to strong government and Indian lives was the lack of a disciplined military force in the Indies. The close of the fifteenth century was marked by the organization of standing forces among the more advanced of the European nations, and Spain was one of the first powers to adopt this system. If each Governor, or Audiencia, had had at command even a small band of disciplined soldiers, looking to the Crown for pay and promotion, independent of local rivalries and animosities, and knit together by the sentiment of loyalty and *esprit de corps*, the possibilities, in the way of good government

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, pp. 331, 332.

would have been incalculable. As it was, authority could only be upheld by calling together a militia of the settlers, who were sometimes expected to enforce laws injurious to themselves, while there was, and could be, no check to any barbarities such levies chose to inflict on the natives. Even such Governors as Ovando, Pedrarias, and Velazquez might have been less terrible had they also commanded a small body of troops instead of being entirely dependent on the adventurers who came over solely to seek fortune, and to whom they were, perhaps, often forced to submit in order to retain some semblance of authority. However, for many years the troops kept in standing pay were too few in number, and their services too continuously required in Europe, to permit any service abroad, besides the fact that the cost would have been prohibitive unless retrenchments had been made in other directions. It was not until the reign of Philip II. that small detachments of royal troops were maintained in the chief places of the Indies, for it was not until that time that the amount of treasure produced enabled the colonies to bear the charge and made them a really valuable portion of the Empire. For the Catholic Kings, and for Charles V., the New World was a ceaseless source of anxiety and almost of weakness, and would have been a source of ruinous expense if the conquest of territory, and the enrichment of the Indians with what the late Sir John Seeley aptly described as Spanish Christianity, had been carried on at the cost of the Crown instead of at that of private adventurers and the natives themselves.

The system of colonization by private enterprise being the one adopted from the beginning leads



saw no difficulty in the western route to Asia, were there anything to be gained by braving the horrors of the unknown ocean, the abode of enchanters and demons, of storms and darkness. From the theoretical side possibly the keynote of western discovery is to be found in the search for Atlantis, the lost continent of Plato and his commentators. The interest in Atlantis died out during the dark ages, but in its place grew beliefs in mythical islands, products of distorted Atlantean legend, of fancied discovery, folklore, or confused report, and, not least, of the prolific imagination of Arab geographers. These beliefs, finding a basis in the islands actually discovered, had supreme influence in attracting both theorists and practical men to the search westwards; the Canaries, the Fortunate Islands of the Ancients, were re-discovered in the thirteenth century, although knowledge of them had never been completely lost; the successive discoveries of Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verde Islands, in the fifteenth century, seemed to give fresh support to the views of those who maintained the actual existence of other islands reported as seen but never found. Human credulity and the reduplication of rumour enlarged enormously the number of islands in the western ocean, until taken in conjunction with the prevailing belief in its narrowness there seemed to be little difficulty, so far as distance was concerned, in passing across it from island to island, although the lapse of centuries had not lessened the mysterious terrors long associated with it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As late as 1609 we read, "Sir George Summers espied land, which they judged it should be the dreadful coast of the Bermudas, which island men of all nations said and supposed to be enchanted and

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Some of the principal of these islands, St. Brendan, Antillia, or the Isle of Seven Cities, Satanaxio, Danmark, and Braçir or Brazil, were accepted by the least credulous cartographers of the fifteenth century, and recur constantly in their maps.<sup>1</sup>

From the point of view of pure imagination, perhaps the most interesting of these is Satanaxio, or "the island of the hand of Satan," who was supposed, once a day, to thrust forth a gigantic hand from the ocean and grasp a number of the inhabitants. Brazil, marked in 1351 in the position of the Azores, has since occupied many situations if it has not played many parts, not the least of its claims to attention being the fact that the search for it caused Bristol merchants to fit out a series of exploring expeditions in and after 1480. It has fallen from the high estate of a large island to that of a rock, and now, in the latest edition of the *North Atlantic Pilot*, is classed among the "doubtful and not to be found" rocks and shoals. Geographically the most important islands were St. Brendan and Antillia, for, as will be seen, by examining Behaim's and Toscanelli's maps, they occupied a convenient half-way position between the group of known and settled islands and Cipangu, Marco Polo's island of golden streets and white-robed inhabitants, which Columbus always believed himself to be on the point of reaching. Antillia was the largest and most eagerly sought of all the islands, the legend being that it had

inhabited with witches and devils which grew by reason of accustomed monstrous thunderstorms and tempests near to these islands."—Stow's *Annales*, Lond. 1615, p. 944.

<sup>1</sup> M. P. Gaffarel (*Revue de Géographie*, i, p. 400) has drawn a map showing all such rocks and islands said to have been seen in one portion alone of the North Atlantic which is studded with them.

naturally to a consideration of the political foresight of Ferdinand and Isabella—"the disposition of the Spanish Court"—in the words of Sir Arthur Helps. Of Ferdinand little need be said; everyone is prepared to throw *him* to the wolves, "the Prince who never preaches aught but peace and good faith and yet of both is the greatest foe," of Machiavelli, but who, as far as words went, was quite as eager as his wife for the welfare of the Indians and expressed himself quite as fluently and amiably. The character of Isabella is a more open question. Sir Arthur Helps takes a very favourable view; a more critical one is that of Mr U. R. Burke, who says that—

The establishment and maintenance of the Inquisition, the banishment of the Jews, the massacre of the Moslems, the Queen's constant breaches of faith to friends and foes, her pitiless disregard for human suffering—these things we are told by Prescott and other less distinguished writers, with a recurrence that at length becomes almost comic, are so foreign to her amiable and gentle nature that although they appeared to be her work it is obvious that some undisclosed villain must be to blame.<sup>1</sup>

The final proposal of Columbus came at a most opportune moment; the Moslem strength in Spain was at length entirely broken, the union of the Peninsular States outside Portugal was complete, the power of the Crown, based on the loyalty of the cities, was unchallenged; and the national revenue, not yet exhausted by political adventure, was growing by "leaps and bounds," having risen from £18,000 in 1474, to £264,000 in 1482, and was to reach £547,000

<sup>1</sup> U. R. BURKE, *Hist. of Spain*, ii, p. 244. Mr Burke decides that she was a great sovereign, although deficient in the qualities usually ascribed to her.

in 1504.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, although there is little doubt that Isabella would have refused the offer had she known that a new continent was to be given to her instead of the coveted western sea passage to the East Indies, the Spanish Crown was politically and financially in a better position to colonize and administer than at any later date. But relatively great as were the resources of Spain, the energies of the country soon became concentrated on European ambitions, which employed all its strength and forbade any great expenditure of men or money on a task that might have taxed the wealth of a modern nation. That Isabella honestly believed that a divine delegation had been imposed on Spain, to bring the heathen millions of the Indies to a higher knowledge is quite probable, but it is obvious from the commencement that not only is as little Spanish money as possible to be expended on the colonies,<sup>2</sup> but that the mission is to be carried out on the cheapest terms and with the uttermost profit to the missionary

<sup>1</sup> The permanent revenue of the English Crown under Henry VII. (1485-1509) did not exceed £100,000 a year.

<sup>2</sup> "Colonies" is a convenient term to describe the Spanish American possessions, but it is hardly a correct one; they were really attached to the Crown, and regarded as the personal possession of the sovereign. Among the many deadly influences they exerted on the mother country there is one that has hardly been noticed, and that is, the corruption they enabled the King to exercise in Spain by the appointment of Spaniards to all offices in America. The destructive effects on Spanish public virtue can best be realized if we imagine the population of the United Kingdom to be eight or ten millions, and every post, from Viceroy to street-sweeper, in India, Canada, Australia, the Cape, and elsewhere, to be filled from Great Britain and Ireland by the nomination of the sovereign, but chiefly from England, as equivalent to Castille. This narcotized Spain, but it was an important factor in bringing about the final revolt, for there was no legitimate ambition open to the colonials.

country. Conscience was salved and duty was done by reiterated orders concerning the good treatment and conversion of the Indians, but we do not find that one of their murderers was ever punished. During the lifetime of Isabella the "pacificators" of Española went scatheless, Ovando was considered a model governor, Pedrarias remained in power till the day of his death, and Velazquez was the recipient of a series of complimentary letters and rewards.<sup>1</sup> Each governor understood that behind his public instructions was the implicit one, sometimes reduced to writing,<sup>2</sup> to send home gold, and there seems little political sagacity in accepting as inevitable the furious and sordid savagery with which they performed their commission. To permit and accept the services of such men was active participation in crime rather than passive incapacity, and the higher we rate the intelligence of the sovereigns, so much the less faith can we place in their honesty. Neither Ferdinand nor Isabella trusted to pious wishes alone in matters nearer to their worldly interests than were Indian lives.

Just as little political foresight was shown in recruiting the expeditions from the human sweepings of the cities and the camps; the difficulty found in obtaining permanent settlers of the agricultural class was not an excuse but itself an indication of the danger of the course pursued. The amount of influence exercised by Ferdinand, during the lifetime of Isabella, in the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i, p. 319. It is true that in the last year of her life Isabella is said to have threatened Ovando with a *Residencia*—i.e. an inquiry; but there is no first-hand evidence on the point, and, if correct in fact, it was not necessarily for his atrocities.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. i, p. 138.

government of the colonies we do not know, nor whether the disastrous edicts of 1497, giving convicted criminals the option of serving across the Atlantic, were due to him, but that such a method should have been approved says little for the statesmanship the Catholic Kings brought to bear on their task. Well might Columbus write that there were many in the Indies who "did not deserve baptism in the eyes of God or man," but what are we to think of the political sagacity which was unable to foresee the consequences of letting them loose, uncontrolled except by paper edicts, to procure the conversion of the natives. *Conquistador* is a good round mouth-filling word, suggesting all that romance associates with the southern skies of poets and dreamers; but if we understand that it really means the criminal and the unsuccessful, we see that no different plan could have been adopted if the Catholic Kings had been indifferent to the fate of Indian bodies if Indian souls were saved. According to their edicts, they were not indifferent, but no measures were ever taken to translate the edicts and laws into facts. Again and again they declared that the first object of discovery was to introduce the blessings of the Holy Catholic Faith; that the Indians were free; that they were not to be killed, or oppressed, or reduced to slavery; all these commands being expressed in the most definite terms. It is equally true that they consistently allowed, almost without comment, these orders to be ignored, as if their mellifluously uttered desires were to be recognised as the mere verbiage of official expression. The path taken by Isabella, and then by Ferdinand, narrowed to the groove in which Spanish administration afterwards moved, and she and he are surely

answerable for the weakness, or the hypocrisy, which permitted benevolent intentions to be set aside and to be replaced by the cruel and murderous lawlessness which finally left to the surviving Indians "the only two inalienable rights in this world conceded by the Pope and acknowledged by the Castillians, those of Entrance and Exit—Nature's two laws of necessity."

Spain's lack of grip on its transatlantic possessions is seen from the beginning, and continued until the end; the reader will observe not only the numerous instances in which the royal injunctions were neglected, but the patience with which the home government endured the neglect. That the colonies rendered allegiance to the mother country so long was due, not to Spain's power to compel it, but to the possession of a common language and a common faith, and the absence of any local patriotism, a deficiency consequent to pride in the original Spanish descent. The student of naval history will be interested in the striking illustration of the value of sea-power shown in Gonzalo Pizarro's revolt. It seems clear that had that leader understood how to use the fleet at his command, de la Gasca would never have got beyond Panamá, and Peru would have lapsed from the Spanish Crown almost before its possession had been realised.<sup>1</sup> As the Counter-Reformation of the late sixteenth century, the schemes of Philip II. as its leader, and the turmoil of war into which he plunged Europe, were all based on the yield from the Potosi silver mines, without which they would not have been possible, the historical imagination may, in this instance, permit itself the one short

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iv, bk. xix, cap. 3.

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flight into hypothesis. The Pizarro revolt illustrated a danger that the Kings of Spain had always to keep in mind, which perhaps accounts, more than tenderness for the natives, for their reluctance from the first to grant *repartimientos* or *encomiendas* except for one life. From the time of Ferdinand's order of 1509,<sup>1</sup> that they were only to be held "during pleasure," there was a continuous struggle between the colonists and the Crown, the former seeking them as a freehold, the latter retaining the reversion as a means of preserving its hold on the loyalty of the settlers. So strong was this feeling during the sixteenth century, that although Philip II. was in dire financial straits when he ascended the throne, and was urged to extricate himself by selling the reversions, he decided to reject this plan, Sir Arthur Helps thinks entirely from humanitarian motives, but perhaps quite as much or more for political reasons. Sir Arthur Helps suggests that the appointment of a prince of the Royal family as the Viceroy of the Indies might have been the salvation of the natives, but the same fears that dominated the Spanish government in dealing with the colonists rendered such a measure impossible. Such a prince would have become a rallying-point for discontent, and would have been urged to erect an independent state. But at no period would any King of Spain have made such an appointment.<sup>2</sup>

The relation between the Roman Church and the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> In 1786 Count D'Aranda declared it to be impossible that Spain could much longer retain the American possessions on the existing system, and proposed to Charles III., the most enlightened monarch who has ever held the crown of Spain, the establishment of three kingdoms, of Mexico, Peru, and Tierra-firme, under members of the



Conquest is far too large a subject to be analyzed here, but it is well to remark that although Las Casas towers as the heroic figure of the Conquest, and although the virtues and efforts of a few of his brother monks would have conferred honour on any faith, the clergy, as a whole, were too often of the type of the ineffable Fray Vicente de Valverde. At the best, they were sluggish parish priests, satisfied with a hybrid product of Romanism and Heathenism in their flocks, reducing the Indians to a condition of flaccid mental pupilage, and teaching them to render unto Caesar—that is to say, the owner of the *repartimiento*—the dues wrung from them in the honour of their women and their own and their children's lives. At the worst, they shared the worldly strivings of their countrymen and sought success by the same methods; it was found necessary to forbid them, either personally or under the cloak of a lay agent, to take shares in the pearl fisheries, to act as managers of estates, to join in working the mines, or to engage in any kind of business, and the existence of such laws is significant enough. What their influence might have been can be understood from the account given by Las Casas of the massacre at Caonao,<sup>1</sup> when he was able to stop the slaughter where he was himself present. The Roman Church did little in its corporate capacity, for it did not speak *ex cathedra* in favour of the Indians until the Brief of Paul III. in 1537, and that was the only instance. By that time murder and torture had done their work, and the power of the Crown and of the law

royal family, Charles himself taking the title of Emperor. Had the plan been adopted, it would only have led to American independence by a different path to that actually followed.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i, pp. 315, 316.

was slowly gaining the upper hand for the protection of the survivors. But the deeds that startled even Spain had left Rome unmoved.

The local maps originally drawn under the supervision of the author have been reproduced for this edition, but for convenience of reference are placed together. In view of the larger ones now added to show the progress of Spanish discovery, it will be advisable to append some remarks on the geographical knowledge of the fifteenth century, and the progress of that knowledge as reflected in cartography. Sir Arthur Helps tell us<sup>1</sup> that, before Prince Henry launched Portugal on the course of discovery, the known world consisted of Europe, cut off short northwards, and more or less incorrectly drawn, except the Mediterranean basin, which, owing to the experience obtained by centuries of navigation, was charted with relatively wonderful accuracy; an imaginative Asia, with some islands in the place of India, but always containing the golden cities of Cathay; and a crescentic narrow Africa, showing only the northern portion, and no continent between Europe and Asia. There were, however, many islands, real and imaginary, laid down in the Atlantic and where America should have been, and these islands were an important factor in attracting scientific thought and adventurous action towards a western passage to India. Whether America was known to the ancients has been a much debated question, but it is quite certain that at least three classical writers—Erathosthenes, Strabo, and Seneca—

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i, p. 11.

been discovered and settled by refugees from Spain after the defeat of King Roderick in 711.<sup>1</sup> St. Brendan is connected with our own history, since it preserves the name of the Abbot of Cluainfert, in Ireland, who died in 577, and who, with a company of monks, is supposed to have found it after a voyage of seven years. Like Brazil, it has occupied many positions on the map, and an expedition in search of it was sent out in 1721, while it was reported as seen as late as 1759.

Although America had been discovered, and perhaps more than once, before the fifteenth century, the desires of Europe after the fall of Constantinople were fixed, not upon a new continent if it existed, but upon a new trade route to Asia. From the time that John of Carpini and William de Rubruquis had ascertained, in the thirteenth century, the existence of an eastern ocean beyond Cathay, the western sea passage to it became a speculative possibility; when the Turkish conquests closed the old trade paths, and the western shores of Africa seemed ever lengthening out before the Portuguese seamen, the possibility was brought down from the region of scholarly speculation to that of practical discussion. Hence Toscanelli's words in his letter of 1474 to his Portuguese correspondent, "I have formerly spoken with you about a shorter route to the places of spices by ocean navigation than that which you are pursuing by Guinea," and the comparatively clear and easy track traced for Columbus on the Toscanelli chart he took with him, truly

<sup>1</sup> The name *Antillas*, now applied to the West Indies as a whole, is probably obtained from this island, early cosmographers having determined that Española and the other islands first discovered were *Antilla Insula*, meaning the group surrounding Antillia on the old maps.

called by Mr Fiske the "most memorable of maps."<sup>1</sup> The original, which was in the possession of Las Casas in 1559, is not now known to exist, but has been restored from the description given of it. Toscanelli placed his islands and the continent of Asia according to his reading of the accounts of early travellers, but as he reckoned the distance between Lisbon and Quinsay at 6500 miles, he eliminated the Pacific Ocean and brought his Cipangu, or Japan, nearly into the Gulf of Mexico, an error more encouraging than the truth would have been. Martin Behaim's globe embodies the geographical knowledge of the fifteenth century immediately before the return of Columbus, since it was completed in 1492, while the Portuguese map of 1490 shows in more detail the contour of the African coast as far as then discovered.

It is certain that Columbus himself drew several charts of the new discoveries, or superintended their execution; one was sent to the Pope, one to Isabella, and several others are referred to, but none is known to have survived. Therefore the earliest map that has come down to us is that of 1500, by Juan de la Cosa, who was owner and master of the *Santa Maria*, the flagship in the first voyage, and the appointed cartographer during the second voyage. He was again in the West Indies in 1499 and 1501, and was killed by the natives when with Ojeda in 1509. The original of the map, of which the western portion is reproduced in this volume, is in the Naval Museum at Madrid, is some six feet in length, and is illuminated in gold and colours. It indicates the results of discovery up to 1500—those of Columbus, the Cabots, Ojeda, and

<sup>1</sup> See also *post*, p. 58.

Pinzon; the map brings out more clearly than written description the very respectable amount of work in the way of exploration that had been performed in eight years, from Cuba through the Islands, down to the Main. But two more years and the Cantino map shows not only Cuba as a known island, instead of being straightly cut off at its western end as in the La Cosa map, but also gives the peninsula of Florida and the south-eastern coasts of the United States, thus proving that that part of North America was discovered long before the received date of 1513.<sup>1</sup> Of course neither the La Cosa nor the Cantino map traces the curve of the Mexican Gulf; in its place La Cosa has a vignette of St. Christopher bearing the child Christ, and some have seen in the features of the saint an attempt to portray Columbus. The next map reproduced here is that by Martin Waldseemüller, from the Ptolemy published in 1513, but of which these maps were probably drawn some years earlier. The reader will notice that North and South America are now united, although not in a way that implies any very exact knowledge, and some commentators hold that the uniting coast line is purely conjectural.

In the interval between 1502 and 1513 the Spanish Government had taken an important step to secure the systematization of knowledge and its application to the general welfare. As early as 1503 the Casa de Contratacion,<sup>2</sup> or India House, had been charged with the duty of preparing charts, but by a *Cédula* of 22nd March 1508, a new department was consti-

<sup>1</sup> H. HARRISSE, *Discovery of North America*, p. 77 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> See *post*, p. 149.

tuted for the tuition, examination, and appointment of pilots,<sup>1</sup> and the construction of charts, under the superintendence of Amerigo Vespucci, therein nominated Pilot Major of Spain. Besides a great number of authorized voyages known to us, there must have been many traders and adventurers who went to the Indies without licence and who largely kept their voyages secret, but whose discoveries, magnified by secrecy and rumour, were a source of confusion, while the experiences of even the licensed navigators were often contradictory, as recorded in individual maps. Therefore, one of the chief duties of the Pilot Major was to prepare a *Padron Real*, or standard map, which should embody the latest discoveries, which should be added to or corrected as occasion arose, and copies of which were to be sold to pilots at moderate rates. To keep the *Padron Real* in touch with discovery, all masters and pilots were ordered to report everything new they found to the Pilot Major as soon as they returned to Spain. Therefore, on the one hand, tuition ensured the employment of a class of men better able to observe, and, on the other, the results of observation were organized.

The effect of these regulations was seen in a few years in a great improvement in practical navigation, although the fresh knowledge obtained, which was kept secret as far as possible, spread more slowly among professional map makers on the continent, who were also far removed from the sources of information. Thus, while Cortes was conquering Mexico, in 1520, the Schöner globe of that year indicates that portion of North America as unknown, and boldly gives the

<sup>1</sup> The office of pilot in the Middle Ages was not confined to the restricted modern use; he was the navigating officer at sea.

eagerly sought for waterway between the northern and southern continents, thus displaying ignorance of the discoveries made by De Cordova and Grijalva, and of the work done by the Spanish explorers on the southern side of the Isthmus. But the two maps of that region given in this volume, the one assigned by Kohl to 1518, and the other by Winsor to 1520, are significantly different in character to the Schöner globe. They were the product of observation, and we may feel sure that the *Padron Real* and ships' charts were of the same kind, and very much more like a modern map than were the school exercises of continental cartographers working from old and second-hand information. The beautiful map of Diego Ribero, of 1529,<sup>1</sup> is a further illustration of this contrast; it is only six years later than the Schöner globe of 1523, which differs little from its predecessors, while the Ribero map is almost modern in its drawing. The explanation is that Diego Ribero was one of the royal cosmographers at Seville, and his map, if not a copy of the *Padron Real*, or *Padron General*, as it was then called, was constructed from the same data as were employed for the standard map. Consequently it shows what a great advance Spanish geographical knowledge had actually made since La Cosa's map of 1500, and that, too, at a time when to ascertain and verify facts was a matter not of months but of years.

<sup>1</sup> Given in vol. ii.





TO THE  
REV. ROBERT PHELPS, D.D.

MASTER OF SIDNEY SUSSEX COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I DEDICATE this book to you, because it is based upon *The Conquerors of the New World and their Bondsmen*, which I dedicated to you several years ago.

Finding that, for the completeness of the work, it required to be more developed, I have been obliged to extend its plan and to enlarge its form.

I need hardly dwell upon the difficulty of my enterprize, and the labour which, for many a weary year, it has entailed upon me. I feel, however, that the more it has cost me, with the greater confidence I can dedicate it to you, who will not look so much upon the result, whether successful or unsuccessful, as upon the expense of life and energy which it represents.

If the work should afford the least aid or enlightenment to those who would legislate wisely upon matters connected with slavery or colonization, neither you nor I shall regret any labour that has been expended upon it.

At the time of my former dedication, you were Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, and I had the additional pleasure of paying a mark of respect to the first officer in a University which I always look upon with due filial reverence and gratitude. These feelings have not grown weaker in the lapse of time, and I am glad to have an opportunity of renewing my expression of them.

It is nearly seven years since I dedicated the *Conquerors* to you ; and it is a pleasure to think that, though so much

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## DEDICATION

has changed in us and around us during these boisterous years, we have the same secure friendship for each other as we had then, and indeed as we had when we were at College together.

I remain,

My dear Friend,

Yours affectionately,

ARTHUR HELPS.

*June 1855.*



## PREFACE

THE present history being a work of a peculiar kind, and the drift of it not likely to be perceived until the reader has advanced some way in the work, it may save him trouble, and may secure his attention to what he would otherwise be likely to pass by as unimportant, if I endeavour to explain at once the object in view, and the mode in which that object has been pursued.

Some years ago, being much interested in the general subject of slavery, and engaged in writing upon it, I began to investigate the origin of modern slavery. I soon found that the works commonly referred to gave me no sufficient insight into the matter. Questions, moreover, arose in my mind, not immediately connected with slavery, but bearing closely upon it, with respect to the distribution of races in the New World. "Why," said I to myself, "are there none but black men in this island; why are there none but copper-coloured men on that line of coast; how is it that in one town the white population predominates, while in another the aborigines still hold their ground? There must be a series of historical events which, if brought to light, would solve all these questions; and I will endeavour to trace this out for myself."

In the simplicity of one who had never before devoted himself to historical writing, I thought, after a time, that I would give a slight sketch of what I had discovered, and that this would be sufficient for my purpose.

Eventually, however, I found that I was involved in a large work, and that there was much to be told about the early discoveries and conquests in America, which is not to be met with in its history as hitherto narrated. I am confirmed in this opinion by one of the greatest

lawyers and most learned men that Spain has produced, whose office<sup>1</sup> gave him access to all the colonial records of that country. He justly remarks that the historians of New Spain neglected to treat of that which was the great result of all the political transactions they narrated. He alludes to the subject of *encomiendas*.<sup>2</sup> I have, unconsciously as far as his remark is concerned (for I did not meet with it until I had matured my own plan), been endeavouring to write a history that should not be liable to this censure. To bring before the reader, not conquest only, but the results of conquest—the mode of colonial government which ultimately prevailed—the extirpation of native races—the introduction of other races—the growth of slavery—and the settlement of the *encomiendas*, on which all Indian society depended—has been the object of this history.

I have now a few words to say about the mode of accomplishing my object. I found that I could not avail myself of anything that had been written before. Other men have written, and I believe successfully, of the various conquests and discoveries made in America; but I have been obliged, both for the reader's sake and for my own, to tell my story in my own way. It does not suffer itself to be told in any one conquest, or in any one discovery. It sometimes lies wholly in the New World, sometimes wholly at the Court of Spain. It depends, at one time, on some powerful minister; at another, upon

<sup>1</sup> ANTONIO DE LEON PINELO, Relator del consejo de las Indias. He was also the author of the great bibliographical work *Epítome de la Biblioteca Oriental y Occidental Náutica y Geográfica*. The *Biographie Universelle* thus describes his labours: "The number of articles from which he made extracts is truly prodigious; the first volume contains the matter of about five hundred volumes of royal cédulas, comprising 120,000 folios and more than 300,000 decrees."

<sup>2</sup> "It does not appear easy to reconcile with royal decrees and the progress of events the form that the *encomiendas* took in New Spain; a point, essential as it is to the story of government, which has not been observed by Francisco Lopez de Gomara, Fr. Antonio de Remesal, Antonio de Herrera, Fr. Juan de Torquemada, nor others of our historians who, treating of political matters, leave aside the *encomiendas* although they were the pivot on which everything turned."—ANTONIO DE LEON PINELO.—*Tratado de Confirmaciones Reales*, part 1, cap. 4. Madrid, 1630.

some resolute conqueror. It follows the course of the remarkable men of the day: and now rises up in one colony, now in another;—its direction not being governed by the relative importance of the colonies. Guatemala, for instance, a country of which we have heard but little in Europe, becomes, at one period, a most important field for investigation in a general history of Spanish Conquest in America. A number of remarkable men happen to be in Guatemala at the same time. Their proceedings give the most apt illustration of their theories respecting slavery, colonization, and colonial government. Hence Guatemala becomes, for several years, the geographical centre of the narrative, as the Pearl Coast had been at a former period.

I feel that, in a work of such extent as this history of the Spanish Conquest, there must be much that is imperfect, and much that is briefly narrated. Being obliged to take a general survey of a large field of history, as well as to enter minutely into detail in those parts of the subject which are important for my purpose and comparatively new to the world, there are particular sections of the history which have necessarily been treated by me with a certain brevity. But, as Oviedo, an historian constantly referred to in the following pages, declares, most men are delighted at coming to an end (*los mas hombres son amigos de conclusion*); and, therefore, any brevity, which is not merely justifiable, but requisite, will, I doubt not, be readily accepted.

I may add, that as regards the authorities I have had recourse to in writing this history, I am greatly indebted to the vast collections of the historian Muñoz (wisely entrusted to the care of that courteous and learned body, the Royal Academy of Madrid),—to the publications which have taken place, in recent times, of documents and even of histories which had hitherto remained in manuscript,—and also, incidentally, to the spirit of research which has grown up of late years in America, and which has brought to light many valuable works connected with the early records of that country.

I have also been singularly fortunate in the number of friends who have taken an almost paternal interest in the

book, and who have aided me by advice, criticism, research, and co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

I commend the work to the reader in the hope that it will make him desirous to turn from my pages to those of other historians, ancient and modern, who will enable him to supply for himself the deficiencies which there are in this history, and to correct the errors with which it must abound, whatever pains may have been taken.

<sup>1</sup> In speaking of the co-operation I have had the good fortune to meet with, I must especially mention the assiduous labours of a gentleman who has done much to add to the value of this work by illustrating it with maps, carefully executed according to scale, and, in several instances, based upon original authorities which he has anxiously scrutinized.

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# BOOK I

## PRINCE HENRY OF PORTUGAL

### CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—DISCOVERY OF THE CANARY ISLANDS  
—BÉTHENCOURT—PORTUGUESE DISCOVERIES IN AFRICA  
UNDER PRINCE HENRY OF PORTUGAL

**T**HE history of almost every nation tells of some great transaction peculiar to that nation, something which aptly illustrates the particular characteristics of the people, and proclaims, as we may say, the part in human nature which that nation was to explain and render visible. In English history, the contest between the Crown and the Parliament; in that of France, the French Revolution; in that of Germany, the religious wars, are such transactions. All nations of the same standing have portions of their several histories much alike. There are border wars, intestine divisions, contests about the succession to the throne, uprisings against favourites, in respect of which, if only different names be applied to the account of one and the same transaction, it will serve very well for the history of various nations, and nobody would feel any strangeness or irrelevancy in the story, whether it were told of France, England, Germany, or Spain. Carrying on this idea to the history of our system, if the other worlds around us are peopled with beings not essentially unlike ourselves, there may be amongst them many Alexanders, Cæsars, and Napoleons: the ordinary routine of conquest may be commonplace enough in many planets. And thus the thing most worthy to be noticed in the records of our Earth may be its commercial slavery and its slave trade. For we may hope, though the difference be to our shame, that they have not had these calamities elsewhere.

## 2 SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA

The peculiar phase of slavery that will be brought forward in this history is not the first and most natural one, in which the slave was merely the captive in war, "the fruit of the spear," as he has figuratively been called, who lived in the house of his conqueror, and laboured at his lands. This system culminated amongst the Romans; partook of the fortunes of the Empire; was gradually modified by Christianity and advancing civilization; declined by slow and almost imperceptible degrees into serfage and vassalage; and was extinct, or nearly so, when the second great period of slavery suddenly uprose. This second period was marked by a commercial character. The slave was no longer an accident of war. He had become the object of war. He was no longer a mere accidental subject of barter. He was to be sought for, to be hunted out, to be produced; and this change accordingly gave rise to a new branch of commerce. Slavery became at once a much more momentous question than it ever had been; and thenceforth, indeed, claims for itself a history of its own.

Black against mankind, and almost unaccountably mean and cruel as much of this history is, still it is not without a phase of true valour and noble endeavour, which may compensate a little for the deep darkness on the other side. The history of slavery is not merely an account of commercial greediness and reckless cruelty carried to the uttermost, but it embodies the efforts of the greatest men of many periods; displays in the fullest light their errors, their disputations, their bewilderments; partakes largely of the nice questions canvassed by ecclesiastics; is combined with the intrigues of courts and cabinets; and, alas! is borne on the winds by the resolute daring of hardy mariners and far-seeing discoverers—men who should have been foremost in the attack upon all mean cruelty, and some of whom thought that they were so. Again, in the history of slavery, if it could be well worked out, lie the means of considering questions of the first importance respecting colonization, agriculture, social order, and government.

The remarkable persons connected with the history of modern slavery are alone sufficient to give it some interest. These are the members of the royal family of Portugal

throughout the fifteenth century, with Prince Henry at their head; then there are Ferdinand and Isabella, Columbus, and the whole band of brave captains who succeeded him in the discovery and conquest of Spanish America; there are Charles the Fifth, Ximenes, Las Casas, Vieyra, and hosts of churchmen and statesmen from those times down to the present.

Lastly, there is the fate of one continent, perhaps we may say, of two, deeply concerned in the history of slavery.

The importance of the records in this matter is not to be measured by the show they make, which is often poor enough. There is many a small skirmish in the history of slavery, which has had more effect upon the fortunes of mankind than pitched battles have had between rival nations contending apparently for universal empire. For the result of any battle may almost be said to depend for importance, not so much upon the measure of success obtained by either side, nor certainly upon the original object of the war, as upon the essential difference between the contending parties, and upon the opinions they hold of each other: greatly on the contempt, whether deserved or not, which the victors have for the vanquished. Supposing, therefore, that one nation, or race, fails to appreciate another which it wars successfully against, the result of that war is likely to be larger, especially for evil, as the misappreciation in question is greater. The consequences of battle, whether between races or individuals, where each knows the worth of the other, are seldom such as to obliterate the fame and courage, or change the whole social aspect of the vanquished party. But when Spartan conquers Helot, barbarian Goth or Visigoth subdues the polished Roman, or civilised man with his many implements invades and oppresses the simple savage, then come the cruelty and dire mismanagement which are born of ignorance and want of sympathy. And thus, as in all human affairs, we have to discover the righteousness that there is in right understanding.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment and equity; yea, every good path.

"When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul."—Prov. c. 2, v. 9, 10.

## 4 SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA

With all due appreciation, however, of the subject of slavery, it must be confessed that it is one which, if treated by itself alone, would lack dramatic interest for a history. It has no single thread to run upon, like the account of any man's life, or the history of a nation. The story of slavery is fragmentary and confused,—having a different state of progress to deal with in different parts of the world at the same time—and is deficient in distinct epochs to be illustrated by great adventures. Moreover, people think that they have already heard all about it; but this, however, is not so.

It may, therefore, be allowed that the reader must bring with him much of the interest which he would have to maintain in studying the history of slavery, if considered strictly by itself. Even then, however, it would not be without that element of the sublime, which consists in great extent, although of desolation. In looking over a vast morass, unmarked by tower, or citadel, or town, which the horizon descends upon but does not bound, the shaping mind may discover more to think of than in the landscape that laughs with every variety of scenic beauty. And here, too, in this subject of slavery is one which, were it ever so dull, presents at all times an indefinite extent of human struggle and human suffering. Happily, however, a subject so deeply and terribly connected with humanity, and which demands the study of the historian, has entwined itself with the most interesting events in secular history; and whenever these are truly and fully told, it cannot but appear, even though it be sedulously kept in the background.

My intention in this work is to make a contribution to the general history of the second period of slavery, by giving such an account of the origin and progress of modern slavery, as will embrace the principal events which led to the subjection of the Indians of the New World and to the introduction of negro slavery in America and the West Indies. The work will thus become, in great part, a history of Spanish America; and, as such, will track Columbus over seas hitherto unsounded by mortal man, will follow the fortunes of Vasco Nufiez, Cortes, and Pizarro; and, through the mother country—at that time

the most important and menacing state in the world—be intimately connected with the perplexed affairs of European politics in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Previously, however, to entering upon these interesting times, the history of modern slavery must commence with the history of African discovery; and the first great step in that, was the discovery of the Canary Islands. These were the "Elysian fields" and "fortunate islands" of antiquity. Perhaps there is no country in the world that has been so many times discovered, conquered, and invaded, or so much fabled about, as these islands. There is scarcely a nation upon earth of any maritime repute that has not had to do with them. Phœnicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Moors, Genoese, Normans, Portuguese, and Spaniards of every province (Arragonese, Castillians, Gallicians, Biscayans, Andalucians) have all made their

<sup>1</sup> [DON JOSÉ ANTONIO SACO (*Historia de la Esclavitud de la Raza Africana en el Nuevo Mundo*, Barcelona, 1879) considers it wrong to suppose that the Portuguese explorers commenced the negro slave traffic. He holds that it existed in Spain and Portugal throughout the Middle Ages: "The Saracenic domination in the Peninsula, with the mercantile relations which were established between it and Africa, brought negro slaves in abundance into Spain and Portugal many centuries before the discoveries by the Portuguese on the west coast of Africa. What these discoveries really did was to give a great stimulus to the trade in negro slaves in the two nations, and to open a direct traffic in them with the newly-discovered countries" (p. 26). Don Antonio Saco's opinion is supported by the fact that, for many years after the discovery of America, licences to export to the West Indies black slaves born in Spain were frequently granted. That is to say, they were Christians, the object of the Spanish monarchs being to keep the settlements free from religious taint; but if there were already many black slaves born in Spain, it implies the presence of negroes in that country at a much earlier time. The modern trade in negroes as articles of commerce may be held to commence with the formation of the Companies of Lagos and Arguim in 1444 and 1448 respectively. Between 1444 and 1460 these companies obtained 700 or 800 slaves a year, many of whom were sold in Spain (*op. cit.* p. 36). It will be seen later how events bore down the opposition of Spanish statesmen to the introduction of slave labour into the West Indies; but that opposition was never based on any ethical grounds, but was due to the fact that the blacks were heathens, and to the fear that, coming of shrewder races and being better fighters than the Indians, they would combine with them to endanger Spanish supremacy.]

## 6 SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA

appearance in these islands.<sup>1</sup> The Carthaginians are said to have discovered them, and to have reserved them as an asylum in case of extreme danger to the state. Sertorius, the Roman general, who partook the fallen fortunes of Marius, is said to have meditated retreat to these "islands of the blessed," and by some writers is supposed to have gone there. Juba, the Mauritanian prince, son of the Juba celebrated by Sallust, sent ships to examine them, and has left a description of them.<sup>2</sup>

Then came the death of empires; and darkness fell upon the human race, at least upon the records of their history. When the world revived, and especially when the use of the loadstone began to be known amongst mariners, the Canary Islands were again discovered. Petrarch is referred to by Viera to prove that the Genoese sent out an expedition to these islands.<sup>3</sup> Las Casas mentions that an English or French vessel bound from France or England to Spain was driven by contrary winds to the Canary Islands, and on its return spread abroad in France an account of the voyage.<sup>4</sup> The information thus obtained

<sup>1</sup> VIERA Y CLAVIGO. *Historia General de las Islas de Canaria*, Madrid, 1772, lib. 3.

<sup>2</sup> VIERA, lib. 1, sec. 18.

<sup>3</sup> PETRARCA, *de Vita Solitaria*, lib. 2, sec. 6, cap. 3.

<sup>4</sup> LAS CASAS, *Historia General de las Indias*. The original of this work is to be found in the library of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid. Four or five copies have been taken, of which the author possesses one. It is a work of the highest historical value, as Las Casas saw with his own eyes, and was himself engaged in, many of the transactions which he narrates; and, moreover, he had taken care to collect contemporary documents, relating to important events, which have since perished.

The course of the narrative is often broken by outbursts of generous indignation at the treatment of the Indians, or by laborious trains of argument to prove that they were free men. These parts, therefore, of the history, which were very fitly addressed to the reader of his own time, have ceased to interest the modern reader, who is generally too much disposed to agree with Las Casas, to care to listen to his arguments or his denunciations. Occasionally, as will be seen, the narrative is admirable, sparkling with the vivacity and intelligence of the writer, and adequately expressing the deep concern which he took in his subject. Indeed, his history is in great part his autobiography.

It would be surprising that a work of such value should not have been printed, but for the fact that Herrera, the royal historiographer of the Indies in the seventeenth century, has made the greatest use of Las



(or perhaps in other ways of which there is no record) stimulated Don Luis de la Cerda, Count of Clermont, great grandson of Don Alonzo the Wise of Castille, to seek for the investiture of the Crown of the Canaries, which was given to him with much pomp by Clement the Sixth, at Avignon, A.D. 1344, Petrarch being present.<sup>1</sup> This sceptre proved a barren one. The affairs of France, with which state the new king of the Canaries was connected, drew off his attention; and he died without having visited his dominions. The next authentic information that we have of the Canary Islands is that, in the times of Don Juan the First of Castille, and of Don Enrique, his son, these islands were much visited by the Spaniards.<sup>2</sup> In 1399, we are told that certain Andalucians, Biscayans, Guipuzcoans, with the consent of Don Enrique, fitted out an expedition of five vessels, and making a descent on the island of Lanzarote, one of the Canaries, took captive the king and queen, and one hundred and seventy of the islanders.<sup>3</sup>

Hitherto, there had been nothing but discoveries, re-discoveries, and invasions of these islands; but, at last, a colonist appears upon the scene. This was Juan de Béthencourt, a great Norman baron, lord of St Martin le Gaillard in the county of Eu, of Béthencourt, of Granville, of Sançerre, and other places in Normandy, and chamberlain to Charles the Sixth of France. Those who are at all familiar with the history of that period, and with the mean and cowardly barbarity which characterized the long continued contests between the rival factions of Orleans and Burgundy, may well imagine that any Frenchman would then be very glad to find a career in some other country. Whatever was the motive of Juan de Béthen-

Casas, weaving in long extracts from the *Historia General*, taken almost verbatim.

[Since Sir Arthur Helps wrote the foregoing, the great history of Las Casas has been printed as volumes 62, 63, 64, 65, and 66 of the *Coleccion de Documentos Ineditos para la Historia de España*, for the years 1875-6. Therefore, throughout the work, the references will be to the volumes and pages of that edition.]

<sup>1</sup> VIERA, lib. 1, sec. 21.

<sup>2</sup> ORTIZ DE ZUÑIGA, *Annales* A.D. 1399, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> VIERA, lib. 3, sec. 25.

## 8 · SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA

court, he carried out his purpose in the most resolute manner. Leaving his young wife, and selling part of his estate, he embarked at Rochelle in 1402 with men and means for the purpose of conquering, and establishing himself in, the Canary Islands. It is not requisite to give a minute description of this expedition. Suffice it to say, that Béthencourt met with fully the usual difficulties, distresses, treacheries, and disasters that attach themselves to this race of enterprising men. After his arrival at the Canaries, finding his means insufficient, he repaired to the court of Castille, did acts of homage to the king, Enrique the Third, and afterwards renewed them to his son Juan the Second, thereby much strengthening the claim which the Spanish monarchs already made to the dominion of these islands.<sup>1</sup> Béthencourt, returning to the islands with renewed resources, made himself master of the greater part of them, reduced several of the natives to slavery, introduced the Christian faith, built churches, and established vassalage. On the occasion of quitting his colony in A.D. 1405, he called all his vassals together, and represented to them that he had named for his lieutenant and governor Maciot de Béthencourt his relation; that he himself was going to Spain and to Rome to seek for a bishop for them; and he concluded his oration with these words:—"My loved vassals, great or small, plebeians or nobles, if you have anything to ask me or to inform me of, if you find in my conduct anything to complain of, do not fear to speak, I desire to do favour and justice to all the world."<sup>2</sup>

The assembly he was addressing contained none of the slaves he had made. We are told, however, and that by eye-witnesses, that the poor natives themselves bitterly regretted his departure, and, wading through the water, followed his vessel as far as they could. After his visit to Spain and to Rome, he returned to his paternal domains in Normandy, where, while meditating another voyage to his colony, he died A.D. 1425.

Maciot de Béthencourt ruled for some time successfully; but, afterwards, falling into disputes with the bishop, and his affairs generally not prospering, Maciot sold his rights

<sup>1</sup> [His uncle, Robert de Braquemont, was in the service of Castille.]

<sup>2</sup> VIERA, lib. 4, sec. 20.

to Prince Henry of Portugal,—also, as it strangely appears, to another person—and afterwards settled in Madeira. The claims to the government of the Canaries were, for many years, in a most entangled state; and the right to the sovereignty over these islands was a constant ground of dispute between the crowns of Spain and Portugal.<sup>1</sup>

Thus ended the enterprise of Juan de Béthencourt, which, though it cannot be said to have led to any very large or lasting results, yet, as it was the first modern attempt of the kind, deserves to be chronicled before commencing with Prince Henry of Portugal's long continued and connected efforts in the same direction. The events also which preceded and accompanied Béthencourt's enterprise need to be recorded, in order to show the part which many nations, especially the Spaniards, had in the first discoveries on the Coast of Africa.

We now turn to the history of the discoveries made, or rather caused to be made, by Prince Henry of Portugal. This Prince was born in 1394. He was the third son of John the First of Portugal and Philippa the daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. That good Plantagenet blood on the mother's side was, doubtless, not without avail to a man whose life was to be spent in continuous and insatiate efforts to work out a great idea. Prince Henry was with his father at the memorable capture of Ceuta, the ancient Septem, in the year 1415. This town, which lies opposite to Gibraltar, was of great magnificence, and one of the principal marts in that age for the productions of the Eastern World.<sup>2</sup> It was here that the Portuguese nation first planted a firm foot in Africa; and the date of this town's capture may, perhaps, be taken as that from which Prince Henry began to meditate further and far greater conquests. His aims, however, were directed to a point long beyond the range of the mere conquering soldier. He was especially learned, for that age of the world, being skilled in mathematical

<sup>1</sup> [Portugal did not completely admit the claim of Castille until 1479.]

<sup>2</sup> "All Europe regarded Ceuta as a treasury of the precious products of the East, where was obtained the valuable merchandise brought not only from Alexandria and Damascus, but from Lybia and Egypt."—*Vida do Infante*, Lisbon, 1758, p. 26.

## 10 SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA

and geographical knowledge. And it may be noticed here, that the greatest geographical discoveries have been made by men conversant with the book knowledge of their time. A work, for instance, often seen in the hands of Columbus, which his son mentions as having had much influence with him, was the learned treatise of Cardinal Petro de Aliaco (Pierre d'Ailly), the *Imago Mundi*.

But, to return to Prince Henry of Portugal. We learn that he had conversed much with those who had made voyages in different parts of the world, and particularly with Moors from Fes and Morocco, so that he came to hear of the Azenegues, a people bordering on the country of the negroes of Jalof.

Such was the scanty information of a positive kind which the Prince had to guide his endeavours. Then there were the suggestions and the inducements which to a willing mind were to be found in the shrewd conjectures of learned men, the fables of chivalry, and, perhaps, in the confused records of forgotten knowledge once possessed by Arabic geographers. The story of Prester John, which had spread over Europe since the crusades, was well known to the Portuguese Prince. A mysterious voyage of a certain wandering saint, called Saint Brendan, was not without its influence upon an enthusiastic mind. Moreover, there were many sound motives urging the Prince to maritime discovery: amongst which, a desire to fathom the power of the Moors, a wish to find a new outlet for traffic, and a longing to spread the blessings of the Faith, may be enumerated. The especial reason which impelled Prince Henry to take the burden of discovery on himself was, that neither mariner nor merchant would be likely to adopt an enterprise in which there was no clear hope of profit.<sup>1</sup> It belonged, therefore, to great men and princes; and amongst such, he knew of no one but himself who was inclined to it. This was not an uncommon motive. A

<sup>1</sup> "And because the said Prince wished to know the truth of this, since it appeared that if he or some other Prince did not try to gain that knowledge no mariners or merchants would ever attempt it, because clearly they would never trouble to navigate to regions where there was not certain hope of profit."—AZURARA, *Chronica de Guiné*, cap. 7.

man sees something that ought to be done, knows of no one who will do it but himself, and so is driven to the enterprise, even should it be repugnant to him.

And now the first thing for those to do, who would thoroughly understand the records of maritime discovery, is the same as it was for Prince Henry, in which we may be sure he was not remiss; namely, to study our maps and charts. Without frequent reference to maps, a narrative like the present forms in our mind only a mirage of names and dates and facts; is wrongly apprehended even while we are regarding it; and soon vanishes away. The map of the world being before us, let us reduce it to the proportions it filled in Prince Henry's time: let us look at our infant world. First, take away those two continents, for so we may almost call them, each much larger than a Europe, to the far West. Then cancel that square massive-looking piece to the extreme South-East; happily there are no penal settlements there yet.<sup>1</sup> Then turn to Africa: instead of that form of inverted cone which it presents, and which we now know there are physical reasons for its presenting, make a scimitar shape of it, by running a slightly curved line from Juba on the eastern side to Cape Nam on the western. Declare all below that line unknown. Hitherto, we have only been doing the work of destruction; but now scatter emblems of Hippogriffs and Anthropophagi on the outskirts of what is left in the map, obeying a maxim, not confined to the ancient geographers only:—where you know nothing, place terrors. Looking at the map thus completed, we can hardly help thinking to ourselves with a smile, what a small space, comparatively speaking, the known history of the world has been transacted in, up to the last four hundred years. The idea of the universality of the Roman dominion shrinks a little; and we begin to fancy that Ovid might have escaped his tyrant.<sup>2</sup> The ascertained confines of the

<sup>1</sup> This was written before gold was discovered in Australia; and when penal settlements were the most notable things in the colony.

<sup>2</sup> "But the empire of the Romans filled the world; and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of imperial despotism,

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world were now, however, to be more than doubled in the course of one century; and to Prince Henry of Portugal, as to the first promoter of these vast discoveries, our attention must be directed.

This Prince having once the well-grounded idea in his mind, that Africa did not end where it was commonly supposed, namely, at Cape Nam (Not), but that there was a world beyond that forbidding negative, seems never to have rested until he had made known that quarter of the globe to his own. He fixed his abode upon the promontory of Sagres, at the southern part of Portugal, whence, for many a year, he could watch for the rising specks of white sail bringing back his captains to tell him of new countries and new men.<sup>1</sup> We may wonder that he never went himself; but he may have thought that he served the cause better by remaining at home and forming a centre whence the electric energy of enterprize was communicated to many discoverers, and then again collected from them. Moreover, he was much engaged in the public affairs of his country. In the course of his life he was three times in Africa, carrying on war against the Moors; and, at home, besides the care and trouble which the state of the Portuguese court and government must have given him, he was occupied in promoting science and encouraging education.

In 1415, as before noticed, he was at Ceuta. In 1418, he was settled on the promontory of Sagres. One night in that year he is thought to have had a dream of promise, for on the ensuing morning, he suddenly ordered two vessels to be got ready forthwith, and to be placed under the command of two gentlemen of his household, Joham

whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the Senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rocks of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master."—GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall*, i, p. 97, Oxford edition.

<sup>1</sup> [He built a palace, church, and observatory there; the neighbouring town of Lagos became a thriving seaport under the stimulus of Prince Henry's expeditions. There is a plan of the promontory of Sagres, or Cape St Vincent, in R. H. MAJOR'S *Prince Henry the Navigator*.]

## THE FIRST PORTUGUESE VOYAGES 13

Gonçalves Zarco and Tristam Vaz, whom he ordered to proceed down the Barbary coast on a voyage of discovery.

A contemporary chronicler, Azurara, whose work<sup>1</sup> has recently been discovered and published, tells the story more simply, and merely states that these captains were young men, who, after the ending of the Ceuta campaign, were as eager for employment as the Prince for discovery; and that they were ordered on a voyage having for its object the general molestation of the Moors, as well as that of making discoveries beyond Cape Nam. The Portuguese mariners had a proverb about this cape, "He who would pass Cape Not, either will return, or not" (*Quem passar o Cabo de Nam, ou tornará ou nam*), intimating that if he did not turn before passing the Cape, he would never return at all. On the present occasion it was not destined to be passed; for these captains Joham Gonçalves Zarco and Tristam Vaz, were driven out of their course by storms, and accidentally discovered a little island, where they took refuge, and from that circumstance called the island Porto Santo. "They found there a race of people living in no settled polity, but not altogether barbarous or savage, and possessing a kindly and most fertile soil."<sup>2</sup> I give this description of the first land discovered by Prince Henry's captains, thinking it would well apply to many other lands about to be found out by his captains and by other discoverers. Joham Gonçalves Zarco and Tristam Vaz returned. Their master was delighted with the news they brought him, more on account of its promise than its substance. In the same year<sup>3</sup> he sent them out again, together with a third captain, named

<sup>1</sup> This authentic and most valuable record was discovered in the *Bibliothèque Impériale* at Paris, by Senhor Fernando Denis in 1837; was published by the Portuguese ambassador, the Visconde da Carreira, who transcribed the MS. with his own hand; and was annotated by the learned Visconde da Santarem. It is a book well worth the care that has been bestowed upon it, as being "The first book written by an European author on the countries situated on the west coast of Africa, beyond Cape Bojador." [There is now an English translation issued by the Hakluyt Society.]

<sup>2</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA, *Asia Portuguesa*, Lisbon, 1666, tom. 1, part 1, cap. 1.

<sup>3</sup> [In 1418.]

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Bartholomew Perestrelo, assigning a ship to each captain. His object was not only to discover more lands, but also to improve those which had been discovered. He sent, therefore, various seeds and animals to Porto Santo. This seems to have been a man worthy to direct discovery. Unfortunately, however, amongst the animals some rabbits were introduced into the new island; and they conquered it, not for the Prince, but for themselves. Hereafter, we shall find that they gave his people much trouble, and caused no little reproach to him.

We come now to the year 1419. Perestrelo, for some cause not known, returned to Portugal at that time. After his departure, Joham Gonçalves Zarco and Tristam Vaz, seeing from Porto Santo something that seemed like a cloud, but yet different (the origin of so much discovery, noting the difference in the likeness), built two boats, and, making for this cloud, soon found themselves alongside a beautiful island, abounding in many things, but most of all in trees, on which account they gave it the name of Madeira (wood).<sup>1</sup> The two discoverers, Joham Gonçalves Zarco and Tristam Vaz, entered the island at different parts. The prince, their master, afterwards rewarded them with the captaincies of those parts. To Perestrelo he gave the island of Porto Santo, to colonize it. Perestrelo, however, did not make much of his captaincy, but after a strenuous contest with the rabbits, having killed an army of them, died himself. This captain has a place in history as being the father-in-law of Columbus,<sup>2</sup> who, indeed, lived at Porto Santo for some time, and here, on new-found land, meditated far bolder discoveries.

Joham Gonçalves Zarco and Tristam Vaz began the cultivation of their island of Madeira, but met with an untoward event at first. In clearing the wood, they kindled a fire amongst it, which burned for seven years,

<sup>1</sup> [In 1420; Sir Arthur Helps ignores the romantic story of Robert Machin's elopement with a lady some time during the reign of Edward III., and their arrival at Madeira instead of a French port after driving at random before a storm. Mr Major and Mr Beazley both think that the Portuguese obtained the information indirectly through the survivors. See also W. L. CLOWES, *History of the Royal Navy*, i, p. 317, sec. *Voyages and Discoveries*, by H. W. WILSON.]

<sup>2</sup> [See *post*, p. 56.]



we are told; and in the end, that which had given its name to the island, and which, in the words of the historian, over-shadowed the whole land, became the most deficient commodity. The captains founded churches in the island; and the King of Portugal, Dom Duarte, gave the temporalities to Prince Henry, and all the spiritualities to the knights of Christ.

While these things were occurring at Madeira and at Porto Santo, Prince Henry had been prosecuting his general scheme of discovery, sending out two or three vessels each year, with orders to go down the coast from Cape Nam, and make what discoveries they could; but these did not amount to much, for the captains never advanced beyond Cape Bojador, which is situated seventy leagues to the south of Cape Nam. This Cape Bojador was formidable in itself, being terminated by a ridge of rocks with fierce currents running round them; but was much more formidable from the fancies which the mariners had formed of the sea and land beyond it. "It is clear," they were wont to say, "that beyond this cape there is no people whatever; the land is as bare as Libya,—no water, no trees, no grass in it; the sea so shallow that at a league from the land it is only a fathom deep; the currents so fierce, that the ship which passes that cape will never return";<sup>1</sup> and thus their theories were brought in to justify their fears.

This outstretcher (for such is the meaning of the word Bojador) was therefore as a bar drawn across that advance in maritime discovery, which had for so long a time been the first object of Prince Henry's life.

The Prince had now been working at his discoveries for twelve years, with little approbation from the generality of persons (*con poca aprovacion de muchos*), the discovery of these islands, Porto Santo and Madeira, serving to whet his appetite for further enterprize, but not winning the common voice in favour of prosecuting discoveries on the coast of Africa. The people at home, improving upon the reports of the sailors, said that "the land which the Prince sought after, was merely some sandy place like the deserts of Libya; that princes had

<sup>1</sup> AZURARA, Paris, 1841, cap. 8.

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possessed the empire of the world, and yet had not undertaken such designs as his, nor shown such anxiety to find new kingdoms; that the men who arrived in these foreign parts (if they did arrive) turned from white into black men; that the King Don John, the Prince's father, had endowed foreigners with land in his kingdom, to break it up and cultivate it—a thing very different from taking the people out of Portugal, which had need of them, to bring them amongst savages to be eaten, and to place them upon lands of which the mother-country had no need; that the Author of the world had provided these islands solely for the habitation of wild beasts, of which an additional proof was, that those rabbits the discoverers themselves had introduced were now dispossessing them of the island.”<sup>1</sup>

There is much here of the usual captiousness to be found in the criticism of bystanders upon action, mixed with a great deal of false assertion and premature knowledge of the ways of Providence. Still it were to be wished that most criticism upon action was as wise; for that part of the common talk which spoke of keeping their own population to bring out their own resources, had a wisdom in it, which the men of future centuries were yet to discover throughout the Peninsula.

Prince Henry, as may be seen by his perseverance up to this time, was not a man to have his purposes diverted by such criticism, much of which must have been in his eyes worthless and inconsequent in the extreme. Nevertheless, he had his own misgivings. His captains came back one after another with no good tidings of discovery, but with petty plunder gained, as they returned, from incursions on the Moorish coast. The Prince concealed from them his chagrin at the fruitless nature of their attempts; but probably did not feel it less on that account. He began to think—Was it for him to hope to discover that land which had been hidden from so many princes? Still he felt within himself the incitement of “a virtuous obstinacy,” which would not let him rest. Would it not, he thought, be in-

<sup>1</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA, tom. i, part i, cap. i. [Mr C. R. BEAZLEY (*Prince Henry the Navigator*, Lond. 1895) traces all these terrible stories to the Arab geographers who, quite as credulous as their Christian confrères, possessed more lively imagination.]

## GIL EANNES DOUBLES CAPE BOJADOR 17

gratitude to God who thus moved his mind to these attempts, if he were to desist from his work, or be negligent in it?<sup>1</sup> He resolved, therefore, to send out again Gil Eannes, one of his household, who had been sent the year before, but had returned, like the rest, having discovered nothing. He had been driven to the Canary Islands, and had seized upon some of the natives there, whom he brought back. With this transaction the Prince had shown himself dissatisfied; and Gil Eannes, now entrusted again with command, resolved to meet all dangers, rather than to disappoint the wishes of his master. Before his departure, the Prince called him aside and said, "You cannot meet with such peril that the hope of your reward shall not be much greater; and in truth, I wonder what imagination this is that you have all taken up—in a matter, too, of so little certainty; for if these things which are reported had any authority, however little, I would not blame you so much. But you quote to me the opinions of four mariners, who, as they were driven out of their way to Flanders or to some other ports to which they commonly navigated, had not, and could not have used, the needle and the chart: but do you go, however, and make your voyage without regard to their opinion, and, by the grace of God, you will not bring out of it anything but honour and profit."<sup>2</sup>

We may well imagine that these stirring words of the Prince must have confirmed Gil Eannes in his resolve to efface the stain of his former misadventure. And he succeeded in doing so; for he passed the dreaded Cape Bojador—a great event in the history of African discovery, and one that in that day was considered equal to a labour of Hercules. Gil Eannes returned to a grateful and most delighted master.<sup>3</sup> He informed the Prince that he had landed, and that the soil appeared to him unworked and fruitful: and, like a prudent man, he could not only tell of foreign plants, but had brought some of them home with him in a barrel of the new-found earth,—plants much like those which bear in Portugal the roses of Santa Maria.

<sup>1</sup> BARROS, Lisbon, 1778, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 4.

<sup>2</sup> AZURARA, cap. 9.

<sup>3</sup> [In 1434. There had been voyages, but no discoveries since 1420.]

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The Prince rejoiced to see them, and gave thanks to God, "as if they had been the fruit and sign of the promised land; and besought our Lady, whose name the plants bore, that she would guide and set forth the doings in this discovery to the praise and glory of God, and to the increase of His holy faith."<sup>1</sup>

The pious wish expressed above is the first of the kind that we have occasion to notice in this history; but similar wishes seem to have been predominant in the minds of the greatest discoverers and promoters of discovery in those times. I believe this desire of theirs to have been thoroughly genuine and deep-seated; and, in fact, that the discoveries would not have been made at that period but for the impulse given to them by the most pious minds longing to promote, by all means in their power, the spread of what to them was the only true and saving faith. There is much to blame in the conduct of the first discoverers in Africa and America; it is, however, but just to acknowledge, that the love of gold was not by any means the only motive which urged them, or which could have urged them, to such endeavours as theirs. We shall more readily admit the above conclusion, if we keep in our minds the views then universally entertained of the merits and efficacy of mere formal communion with the Church, and the fatal consequences of not being within that communion. A man so enlightened as Las Casas scorns to be bound by passages brought against him in argument from the works of heathen writers, men who are now living in hell, as he says: and Columbus, in giving an account of his third voyage to the Catholic sovereigns, says, that in temporal matters he has only a "blanca" for the offertory, and that in spiritual matters he is so apart from the holy sacraments of the holy Church, that if he were to die where he is, his soul would be forgotten (*que se olvidará desta ánima si se aparta acá del cuerpo*). "Weep for me," he adds, "ye that are charitable, true, or just."

And doubtless, in the minds of the common people,

<sup>1</sup> BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 4. AZURARA, cap. 9.

## THE FIRST CAPTURE OF MOORS 19

the advantage of this communion with the Church stood at the highest. This will go a long way to explain the wonderful inconsistency, as it seems to us, of the most cruel men appealing to their good works as promoters of the faith. And the maintenance of such church principles will altogether account for the strange oversights which pure and high minds have made in the means of carrying out those principles, fascinated as they were by the brilliancy and magnitude of the main object they had in view.

The old world had now obtained a glimpse beyond Cape Bojador. The fearful "outstretcher" had no longer much interest for them, being a thing that was overcome, and which was to descend from an impossibility to a landmark, from which, by degrees, they would almost silently steal down the coast, counting their miles by thousands, until Vasco de Gama should boldly carry them round to India.

After the passing of Cape Bojador there was a lull in Portuguese Discovery, the period from 1434 to 1441 being spent in enterprizes of very little distinctness or importance. Indeed, during the latter part of this period, the Prince was fully occupied with the affairs of Portugal. In 1437 he accompanied the unfortunate expedition to Tangier, in which his brother Ferdinand was taken prisoner, who afterwards ended his days in slavery to the Moor. In 1438, King Duarte dying, the troubles of the regency occupied Prince Henry's attention. In 1441, however, there was a voyage which led to very important consequences. In that year Antonio Gonçalves, master of the robes to Prince Henry, was sent out with a vessel to load it with skins of "sea-wolves," a number of them having been seen, during a former voyage, in the mouth of a river about fifty-four leagues beyond Cape Bojador. Gonçalves resolved to signalize his voyage by a feat that should gratify his master more than the capture of sea-wolves; and he accordingly planned and executed successfully an expedition for capturing some Azeneghi Moors, in order, as he told his companions, to take home "some of the language of that country." Nuño Tristam,

another of Prince Henry's captains, afterwards falling in with Gonçavez, a further capture of Moors was made, and Gonçavez returned to Portugal with his spoil.

In the same year, Prince Henry applied to Pope Eugenius the Fourth, praying that his Holiness would grant to the Portuguese crown all that it should conquer, from Cape Bojador to the Indies, together with plenary indulgence for those who should die while engaged in such conquests. The Pope granted these requests. "And now," says a Portuguese historian, "with this apostolic grace, with the breath of royal favour, and already with the applause of the people, the Prince pursued his purpose with more courage and with greater outlay."<sup>1</sup>

In 1442, the Moors whom Antonio Gonçavez had captured in the previous year, promised to give black slaves in ransom for themselves, if he would take them back to their own country; and the Prince, approving of this, ordered Gonçavez to set sail immediately, "insisting as the foundation of the matter, that if Gonçavez should not be able to obtain so many negroes (as had been mentioned) in exchange for the three Moors, yet that he should take them; for whatever number he should get, he would gain souls, because they (the negroes) might be converted to the faith, which could not be managed with the Moors."<sup>2</sup> Here again may be seen the religious motive predominating: and, indeed, the same motive may be deduced from numerous passages in which this Prince's conduct comes before us.

Gonçavez obtained ten black slaves, some gold dust, a target of buffalo hide, and some ostriches' eggs, in exchange for two of the Moors, and, returning with his cargo, excited general wonderment on account of the colour of the slaves.<sup>3</sup> These, then, we may presume, were the first black slaves that made their appearance in the Peninsula since the extinction of the old slavery.

I am not ignorant that there are reasons for alleging

<sup>1</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA, tom. I, part I, cap. I. [His brother, the Regent Dom Pedro, also granted Prince Henry the royal fifth of the profits from these expeditions.]

<sup>2</sup> BARROS, dec. I, lib. I, cap. 7.

<sup>3</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA, tom. I, part I, cap. I.

that negroes had before this era been seized and carried to Seville. The *Ecclesiastical and Secular Annals* of that city, under the date 1474, record that negro slaves abounded there, and that the fifths levied on them produced considerable gains to the royal revenue; it is also mentioned that there had been traffic of this kind in the days of Don Enrique the Third, about 1399, but that it had since then fallen into the hands of the Portuguese. The chronicler states that the negroes of Seville were treated very kindly from the time of King Enrique, being allowed to keep their dances and festivals; and that one of them was named "mayoral" of the rest, who protected them against their masters, and before the courts of law, and also settled their own private quarrels. There is a letter from Ferdinand and Isabella in the year 1474, to a celebrated negro, Juan de Valladolid, commonly called the "Negro Count" (el Conde Negro), nominating him to this office of "mayoral of the negroes," which runs thus:—"For the many good, loyal, and signal services which you have done us, and do each day, and because we know your sufficiency, ability, and good disposition, we constitute you mayoral and judge of all the negroes and mulattoes, free or slaves, which are in the very loyal and noble city of Seville, and throughout the whole Archbishopric thereof, and that the said negroes and mulattoes may not hold any festivals, nor pleadings amongst themselves, except before you Juan de Valladolid, negro, our judge and mayoral of the said negroes and mulattoes; and we command that you, and you only, should take cognisance of the disputes, pleadings, marriages and other things which may take place amongst them, forasmuch as you are a person sufficient for that office, and deserving of your power, and you know the laws and ordinances which ought to be kept, and we are informed that you are of noble lineage amongst the said negroes."<sup>1</sup>

But the above merely shows that in the year 1474 there were many negroes in Seville, and that laws and ordinances had been made about them. These negroes might all, however, have been imported into Seville since the

<sup>1</sup> ORTIZ DE ZUÑIGA, *Annales Ecclesiásticos y Seculares de Sevilla*, p. 374. Madrid, 1677.

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Portuguese discoveries. True it is, that in the times of Don Enrique the Third, and during Béthencourt's occupation of the Canary Islands, slaves from thence had been brought to France and Spain; but these islanders were not negroes, and it certainly may be doubted whether any negroes were imported into Seville previous to 1443.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to the course of Portuguese affairs, an historian of that nation informs us that the gold obtained by Gonçalvez "awakened, as it always does, covetousness";<sup>2</sup> and there is no doubt that it proved an important stimulus to further discovery. The next year Nuño Tristam went further down the African coast; and, off Adeget, one of the Arguim Islands, captured eighty natives, whom he brought to Portugal. These, however, were not negroes, but Azenegues.

The tide of popular opinion was now not merely turned, but was rushing in full flow, in favour of Prince Henry and his discoveries. The discoverers were found to come back rich in slaves and other commodities; whereas it was remembered that in former wars and undertakings, those who had been engaged in them, had generally returned in great distress. Strangers, too, now came from afar, scenting the prey. A new mode of life, as the Portuguese said, had been found out; and "the greater part of the kingdom was moved with a sudden desire to follow this way to Guinea."<sup>3</sup>

In 1444, a company was formed at Lagos, who received permission from the Prince to undertake discovery along the coast of Africa, paying him a certain portion of any gains which they might make. This has been considered as a company founded for carrying on the slave trade; but the evidence is by no means sufficient to show that its founders meant such to be its purpose. It might rather be compared to an expedition sent out, as we should say in modern times, with letters of marque, in which, however, the prizes chiefly hoped for, were not ships, nor merchandize, but men. The only thing of any moment, however,

<sup>1</sup> [See note p. 5.]

<sup>2</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA.

<sup>3</sup> BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 8.



which the expedition accomplished, was to attack successfully the inhabitants of the islands Nar and Tider, and to bring back about two hundred slaves.<sup>1</sup> I grieve to say that there is no evidence of Prince Henry's putting a check to any of these proceedings; but, on the contrary, it appears that he rewarded with large honours Lançarote, one of the principal men of this expedition, and received his own fifth of the slaves. Yet I have scarcely a doubt that the words of the historian are substantially true—that discovery, not gain, was still the Prince's leading idea.<sup>2</sup> We have an account from an eye-witness of the partition of the slaves brought back by Lançarote,<sup>3</sup> which, as it is the first transaction of the kind on record, is worthy of notice, more especially as it may enable the reader to understand the motives of the Prince, and of other men of those times. It is to be found in the *Chronicle*, before referred to, of Azurara. The merciful chronicler is smitten to the heart at the sorrow he witnesses, but still believes it to be for good; and that he must not let his mere earthly commiseration get the better of his piety.

"O thou heavenly Father," he exclaims, "who, with thy powerful hand without movement of thy divine essence, governest all the infinite company of thy holy city, and who drawest together all the axles of the upper worlds, divided into nine spheres, moving the times of their long and short periods as it pleases thee! I implore thee that my tears may not condemn my conscience, for not its law, but our common humanity constrains my humanity to lament piteously the sufferings of the people (slaves). And if the brute animals, with their mere bestial sentiments, by a natural instinct, recognize the misfortunes of their like, what must this my human

<sup>1</sup> BARROS does not say of what race these slaves were, but merely calls them "almas." FARIA Y SOUSA gives them the name of "Moors," a very elastic word. I imagine that they were Azenegues.

<sup>2</sup> "Because one of the things that the Infante at that time had chiefly before his eyes, and in which he could be best pleased and served, was that of discovery, being a thing that he had established and cherished with so much industry and at so much expense."—BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 8.

<sup>3</sup> ["The voyage was a slave-chase from first to last," says Mr BRAZLEY.]

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nature do, seeing thus before my eyes this wretched company, remembering that I myself am of the generation of the sons of Adam! The other day, which was the eighth of August, very early in the morning, by reason of the heat, the mariners began to bring-to their vessels, and, as they had been commanded, to draw forth those captives to take them out of the vessel: whom, placed together on that plain, it was a marvellous sight to behold, for amongst them there were some of a reasonable degree of whiteness, handsome and well made; others less white, resembling leopards in their colour; others as black as Ethiopians, and so ill-formed, as well in their faces as their bodies, that it seemed to the beholders as if they saw the forms of a lower hemisphere. But what heart was that, how hard soever, which was not pierced with sorrow, seeing that company: for some had sunken cheeks, and their faces bathed in tears, looking at each other; others were groaning very dolorously, looking at the heights of the heavens, fixing their eyes upon them, crying out loudly, as if they were asking succour from the Father of nature; others struck their faces with their hands, throwing themselves on the earth; others made their lamentations in songs, according to the customs of their country, which, although we could not understand their language, we saw corresponded well to the height of their sorrow. But now, for the increase of their grief, came those who had the charge of the distribution, and they began to put them apart one from the other, in order to equalize the portions; wherefore it was necessary to part children and parents, husbands and wives, and brethren from each other. Neither in the partitions of friends and relations was any law kept, only each fell where the lot took him. O powerful fortune! who goest hither and thither with thy wheels, compassing the things of the world as it pleaseth thee, if thou canst, place before the eyes of this miserable nation some knowledge of the things that are to come after them, that they may receive some consolation in the midst of their great sadness! and you others who have the business of this partition, look with pity on such great misery, and consider how can those be parted whom you cannot disunite.

Who will be able to make this partition without great difficulty? for while they were placing in one part the children that saw their parents in another, the children sprang up perseveringly and fled to them; the mothers enclosed their children in their arms and threw themselves with them on the ground, receiving wounds with little pity for their own flesh, so that their offspring might not be torn from them! And so, with labour and difficulty, they concluded the partition, for, besides the trouble they had with the captives, the plain was full of people, as well of the place as of the villages and neighbourhood around, who in that day gave rest to their hands, the mainstay of their livelihood, only to see this novelty. And as they looked upon these things, some deploring, some reasoning upon them, they made such a riotous noise, as greatly to disturb those who had the management of this distribution. The Infante was there upon a powerful horse, accompanied by his people, looking out his share, but as a man who for his part did not care for gain, for, of the forty-six souls which fell to his fifth, he speedily made his choice, as all his principal riches were in his contentment, considering with great delight the salvation of those souls which before were lost. And certainly his thought was not vain, for as soon as they had knowledge of our language, they readily became Christians; and I, who have made this history in this volume, have seen in the town of Lagos young men and young women, the sons and grandsons of those very captives, born in this land, as good and as true Christians as if they had lineally descended, since the commencement of the law of Christ, from those who were first baptized."<sup>1</sup>

The good Azurara wished that these captives might have some foresight of the things to happen after their death. I do not think, however, that it would have

<sup>1</sup> AZURARA, cap. 25. I have not scrupled to give Azurara's description of this remarkable scene without abridgment; and, indeed, throughout this narrative I shall be obliged to quote largely. Many of the works referred to are in manuscript. Several even of the printed ones are of the highest rarity. In such a case it seems to be a service to literature to quote as copiously from the original documents as can be done without embarrassing the narrative, or encumbering the page.

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proved much consolation to them to have foreseen that they were almost the first of many millions to be dealt with as they had been ; for, in this year, 1444, Europe may be said to have made a distinct beginning in the slave trade, henceforth to spread on all sides, like the waves upon stirred water, and not, like them, to become fainter and fainter as the circles widen.

In 1445, an expedition was fitted out by Prince Henry himself, and the command given to Gonsalvo de Cintra, who was unsuccessful in an attack on the natives near Cape Blanco. He and some other of the principal men of the expedition lost their lives. These were the first Portuguese who died in battle on that coast. In the same year, the Prince sent out three other vessels. The captains received orders from the Infante, Dom Pedro, who was then regent of Portugal, to enter the river d'Oro, and make all endeavours to convert the natives to the faith, and even, if they should not receive baptism, to make peace and alliance with them. This did not succeed. It is probable that the captains found negotiation of any kind exceedingly tame and apparently profitless in comparison with the pleasant forays made by their predecessors. The attempt, however, shows much intelligence and humanity on the part of those in power in Portugal. That the instructions were sincere, is proved by the fact of this expedition returning with only one negro, gained in ransom, and a Moor who came of his own accord to see the Christian country.

This same year 1445, is signalized by a great event in the progress of discovery along the African coast. Dinis Dyaz, called by Barros and the historians who followed him, Dinis Fernandez, sought employment from the Infante, and being entrusted by him with the command of a vessel, pushed boldly down the coast, and passed the river Sanaga (Senegal) which divides the Azenegues (whom the first discoverers always called Moors) from the negroes of Jalof. The inhabitants were much astonished at the presence of the Portuguese vessel on their coasts, and at first took it for a fish, or a bird, or a phantasm ; but when in their rude boats (hollowed logs) they neared

it, and saw that there were men in it, judiciously concluding that it was a more dangerous thing than fish, or bird, or phantasm, they fled. Dinis Fernandez, however, captured four of them off that coast, but as his object was discovery, not slave hunting,<sup>1</sup> he went on till he discovered Cape Verde, and then returned to his country, to be received with much honour and favour by Prince Henry. These four negroes taken by Dinis Fernandez, were the first taken in their own country by the Portuguese.<sup>2</sup> That the Prince was still engaged in high thoughts of discovery and conversion, we may conclude from observing that he rewarded and honoured Dinis Fernandez as much as if he had brought him large booty; for the Prince "thought little of whatever he could do for those who came to him with these signs and tokens of another greater hope which he entertained."<sup>3</sup>

In this case, too, as in others, we should do great injustice, if we supposed that Prince Henry had any of the pleasure of a slave-dealer in obtaining these negroes: it is far more probable that he valued them as persons capable of furnishing intelligence, and, perhaps, of becoming interpreters, for his future expeditions. Not that, without these especial motives, he would have thought it anything but great gain for a man to be made a slave, if it were the means of bringing him into communion with the Church.

After this, several expeditions, which did not lead to much, occupied the Prince's time till 1447. In that year,<sup>4</sup> a fleet, large for those times, of fourteen vessels,<sup>5</sup> was fitted out at Lagos by the people there, and the command given by Prince Henry to Lançarote. The object seems to have been, from a speech that is recorded of Lançarote's, to make war upon the Azeneghi Moors, and especially to take revenge for the defeat before mentioned which Gonsalvo de Cintra suffered in 1445, near Cape

<sup>1</sup> BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "These were the first to be taken by Christians in their own land, and there is no chronicle or history that tells to the contrary."—AZURARA, cap. 31.

<sup>3</sup> BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 9.

<sup>4</sup> [1445. Only one Portuguese authority says 1447.]

<sup>5</sup> [Twenty-seven vessels.]

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Blanco. That purpose effected, Lançarote went southwards, extending the discovery of the coast to the river Gambia.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his proceedings on that coast, we find again that Prince Henry's instructions insisted much upon the maintenance of peace with the natives.<sup>2</sup> Another instance of the same disposition on his part deserves to be especially recorded. The expedition had been received in a friendly manner at Gomera, one of the Canary Islands.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding this kind reception, some of the natives were taken prisoners. On their being brought to Portugal, Prince Henry had them clothed and afterwards set at liberty, in the place from which they had been taken.<sup>4</sup>

This expedition under Lançarote had no great result. The Portuguese went a little further down the coast than they had ever been before, but they did not succeed in making friends of the natives, who had already been treated in a hostile manner by some Portuguese from Madeira. Neither did the expedition make great spoil of any kind. They had got into feuds with the natives, and were preparing to attack them, when a storm dissipated their fleet and caused them to return home.

It appears, I think, from the general course of proceedings of the Portuguese in those times, that they considered there was always war between them and the Azeneghi Moors—that is, in the territory from Centa as far as the Senegal River; but that they had no declared hostility against the negroes of Jalof, or of any country further South, though skirmishes would be sure to happen from ill-understood attempts at friendship on the one side, and just or needless fears on the other.

The last public enterprize of which Prince Henry had the direction was worthy to close his administration of

<sup>1</sup> [After attacking, defeating, and capturing the natives at Tider, the expedition broke up; only six ships pursued the voyage southward. One other, under the command of Alvaro Fernandez, continued alone and reached the farthest point yet attained, midway between Cape Verde and the Gambia.]

<sup>2</sup> BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 13.

<sup>3</sup> [These were three ships which deserted the fleet and made a descent on the Canaries.]

<sup>4</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA, tom. 1, part 1, cap. 1.

the affairs relating to Portuguese discovery. He caused two ambassadors to be dispatched to the King of the Cape Verde territory, to treat of peace, and to introduce the Christian faith. One of the ambassadors, a Danish<sup>1</sup> gentleman, was treacherously killed by the natives, and upon that the other returned, having accomplished nothing.<sup>2</sup>

Don Alfonso the Fifth, the nephew of Prince Henry, now took the reins of government, and the future expeditions along the coast of Africa proceeded in his name. Still it does not appear that Prince Henry ceased to have power and influence in the management of African affairs; and the first thing that the king did in them was, to enact that no one should pass Cape Bojador without a license from Prince Henry. Some time between 1448 and 1454 a fortress was built in one of the islands of Arguim,<sup>3</sup> which islands had already become a place of bargain for gold and negro slaves.<sup>4</sup> This was the first Portuguese establishment on the coast of Africa. It seems that a system of trade was now established between the Portuguese and the negroes.<sup>5</sup>

Having come to an important point in the course of Portuguese discovery, we may now make a pause, not without some satisfaction at having got through a tedious part of the narrative—a part chiefly marked by names, dates, and bare events, which stand in the undiversified story, like solitary post-houses in the “Steppes” of Russia, or the “Landes” in France.

Admitting, however, to the full, any tediousness that

<sup>1</sup> This employment of a foreigner, which is not the only instance, seems to show that the Portuguese Prince cultivated good relations with intelligent men of other countries.

<sup>2</sup> [This occurred in 1448.]

<sup>3</sup> [In 1448.]

<sup>4</sup> “Because the purchase of gold and negroes was carried on at the Islands of Arguim, the king ordered the castle of that name to be built on one of them, and that was the first one built in any of our conquests.”—FARIA Y SOUSA, tom I, part 1, cap. 2.

<sup>5</sup> “At this time commerce on the Guinea Coast was carried on usually between us and the inhabitants of those parts; and both one and the other communicated on matters of business in peace and friendship, without fights, assaults, and robberies, which had not previously been the case.”—BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 2, cap. 2. See also AZURARA, cap. 95.

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there may be in this account of early Portuguese discovery, we ought not, I think, to consider it uninteresting. The beginnings of great things—even if obscure, trivial, isolated; without the details which bring reality into presence; and round which the hopes and the fortunes of men have not yet gathered—still cannot be devoid of interest to any thoughtful, forecasting mind. The traveller willingly dismounts to see the streamlet which is the origin of a great river: and the man of imagination (who is patient in research because he is imaginative), as, in science, he laboriously follows with delight the tracks now hardened in the sandstone of obscure birds which paddled over those buried plains ages ago; so, in history, he will often find material to meditate upon, and to observe, in slight notices which, however, like the others, indicate much to him of bygone times and wondrous changes.



## CHAPTER II

### CA DA MOSTO'S VOYAGE — PRINCE HENRY'S DEATH — HIS CHARACTER — FURTHER DISCOVERIES OF THE KINGS OF PORTUGAL

**A**T the close of the preceding chapter it was intimated that the narrative of these Portuguese Voyages is rather uninviting. Could we recall, however, the voyagers themselves, and listen to their story, we should find it animating enough. Each enterprize, as we have it now, with its few dry facts, seems a meagre affair; but it was far otherwise to the men who were concerned in it. We have seen that piety had a large part in these undertakings: doubtless the love of adventure and the craving for novelty had their influences also.<sup>1</sup> And what adventure it was! new trees, new men, new animals, new stars, to be seen: nothing bounded, nothing trite; nothing which had the bloom taken off it by much previous description! These early voyagers, moreover, were like children coming out to take their first gaze into the world, with ready credulity and unlimited fancy, willing to believe in fairies and demons, Amazons and "forms of a lower hemisphere," mystic islands, and fountains of perpetual youth.

Then, too, besides the hopes and fears of each individual of the crew, the conjoint enterprize had in it a life to be lived, and a career to be worked out. It started to do something: fulfilled its purpose, or at least some purpose; and then came back radiant with success—from

<sup>1</sup> "They err who regard the Conquistadores as led only by a thirst for gold, or even exclusively by religious fanaticism. Dangers always exalt the poetry of life; and moreover, the powerful age which we here seek to depict in regard to its influence on the development of cosmical ideas, gave to all enterprises, as well as to the impressions of nature offered by distant voyages, the charm of novelty and surprise, which begins to be wanting to our present more learned age in the many regions of the earth which are now open to us." — HUMBOLDT'S *Kosmos*, Sabine's translation, London, 1848, ii, p. 272.

that time forward to be a great fact in history. Or, on the other hand, there was some small failure or mischance, perhaps, early in the voyage: the sailors then began to reckon up ill omens, and to say, that little good would come of this business. Further on, some serious misadventure happened which made them turn; or from the mere lapse of time, they were obliged to bethink themselves of getting back. Safety, not renown nor profit, now became their object; and their hope was at best but the negative of some fear. Thereupon, no doubt, ensued a good deal of recrimination amongst themselves; for very few people are magnanimous enough to share ill-success kindly together. Then, in the long dull evenings of their voyage homewards, as they sat looking on the waters, they thought what excuses and explanations they would make to their friends at home, and how shame and vexation would mingle with their joy at returning.

This transaction, teeming as it did with anxious life, makes but a poor show in some chronicle—they sailed; and did something, or failed in doing, and then came back; and this was in such a year:—brief records, like the entry in an almanack, or the few emphatic words on a tombstone!

At the period, however, we are now entering upon, the annals of maritime discovery are fortunately enriched by the account of a voyager who could tell more of the details of what he saw than we have hitherto heard from other voyagers, and who was, himself, his own chronicler.

In 1454, Ca da Mosto, a young Venetian, who had already gained some experience in voyaging, happened to be on board a Venetian galley that was detained by contrary winds at Cape St Vincent. Prince Henry was then living close to the cape. He sent his secretary and the Venetian consul on board the galley. They told of the great things the Prince had done, showed samples of the commodities that came from the lands discovered by him (Madeira sugars, Dragon's blood, and other articles), and spoke of the gains made by Portuguese voyagers being as great as 700 or 1000 per cent. Ca da Mosto expressed his wish to be employed, was informed

of the terms that would be granted,<sup>1</sup> and heard that a Venetian would be well received by the Prince, "because he was of opinion, that spices, and other rich merchandize, might be found in these parts; and knew, that the Venetians understood these Commodities better than any other Nation."<sup>2</sup>

In fine, Ca da Mosto saw the Prince, and was evidently much impressed by his noble bearing. He obtained his wishes, and being furnished with a caravel, he embarked his merchandize in it, and set off on a voyage of discovery. There was now for the first time an intelligent man on board one of these vessels, giving us his own account of the voyage.

From Ca da Mosto the reader at once learns the state of things with regard to the slave trade. The Portuguese factory at Arguim was the headquarters of the trade. Thither came all kinds of merchandize; and gold and slaves were taken back in return. The "Arabs" of that district (Moors, the Portuguese would have called them) were the middle men in this affair. They took their Barbary horses to the negro country, and "there bartered with the great men for slaves," getting from ten to eighteen slaves for each horse. They also brought silks of Granada and Tunis, and silver, in exchange for which they received slaves and gold. These Arabs, or Moors, had a place of trade of their own, called Hoden, behind Cape Blanco. There the slaves were brought, "from whence, Ca da Mosto says, they are sent to the mountains of Barka, and from thence to Sicily; part of them are also brought to Tunis, and along the coast of Barbary, and the rest to Argin, and sold to the licensed Portuguese. Every year between seven and eight hundred slaves are sent from Argin to Portugal."<sup>3</sup>

"Before this trade was settled," says Ca da Mosto, "the Portuguese used to seize upon the Moors themselves

<sup>1</sup> [The terms were that either the adventurer equipped a ship at his own expense, and on his return paid the Prince one-fourth of the produce of his voyage; or the Prince undertook the whole expense of equipment, receiving one-half of the produce. In the event of failure, the Prince bore the whole loss.]

<sup>2</sup> ASTLEY'S *Voyages*, i, p. 574.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i, p. 577.

(as appears occasionally from the evidence that has before been referred to), and also the Azenegues who live further towards the South; but now peace is restored to all, and the Infante suffers no further damage to be done to these people. He is in hopes, that by conversing with Christians, they may easily be brought over to the Romish faith, as they are not, as yet, well established in that of Mohammed; of which they know nothing but by hearsay.”<sup>1</sup>

No doubt the Prince's good intentions were greatly furthered by the convenience of this mode of trading. In short, gain made for itself its usual convenient channels to work in, and saved itself as much as it could the trouble of discovery, or of marauding.

Ca da Mosto being, as was said before, the first modern European visiting Africa who gives, himself, an account of it, and being moreover apparently an honest and intelligent man, all that he narrates is most valuable. He notices the difference of the people and the country on the opposite sides of the Senegal river. On the northern side he finds the men small, spare and tawny; the country arid and barren: on the southern side, the men “exceeding black, tall, corpulent and well made; the country green and full of green trees.” This latter is the country of Jalof, the same that Prince Henry first heard of in his intercourse with the Moors. Ca da Mosto gives a minute description of the people, which is well worth noting. Both men and women, he says, wash themselves four or five times a day, being very cleanly as to their persons, but not so in eating, in which they observe no rule. Although very ignorant and awkward in going about anything which they have not been accustomed to, yet in their own business which they are acquainted with, they are as expert as any Europeans can be. They are full of words, and never have done talking; and are, for the most part, liars and cheats. Yet, on the other hand, they are very charitable; for they give a dinner, or a night's lodging and a supper to all strangers who come to their houses, without expecting any return.

“These negro lords often make war among themselves, and with their neighbours. They have no cavalry for

<sup>1</sup> ASTLEY's *Voyages*, i, p. 578.

want of horses: they wear no arms save a large target for their defence, made of the skin of a beast called Danta, which is very difficult to be pierced, and Azagays, or light darts, in throwing of which they are very dexterous. These darts are pointed with iron, the length of a span, barbed in different manners; so that they make dangerous wounds in the body wherever they enter, tearing the flesh grievously when pulled out. They also have a Moorish weapon, which is like a Turkish half-sword; that is, bent like a bow, and made of iron (without any steel) brought from the kingdom of Gambia by the negroes, who thereof make their arms; and if they have any iron in their own country, they know nothing of it, or want industry to work it. They use also another weapon, like our javelin; besides which they have no other arms.

"As they have but few arms, their wars are very bloody, for their strokes do not fall in vain. They are extremely bold and fierce, choosing rather to be killed, than to save their lives by flight. They are not afraid to die, nor scared, as other people are, when they see a companion slain. They have no ships, neither did they ever see any before the Portuguese came upon their coast. Those inhabiting near the river, and some who live by the sea, have Zap-polies, or Almadias, made out of a single piece of wood, the largest whereof carries three or four men. In these they fish sometimes, and go up and down the river. These negroes are the greatest swimmers in the world, by the experiments the author has seen of them in these parts."<sup>1</sup>

Ca da Mosto left the country of the Jalofs and proceeded eight hundred miles further, as he says, but he must, I think, have over-estimated his reckoning, to the country of a negro potentate, called King Budomel.<sup>2</sup> Budomel received the voyager courteously, and made purchases of him, which were paid for in slaves. Ca da Mosto gives an account of the religion of Budomel's country, which deserves notice: it seems to show that the religion of the court at least was Mahometan; but

<sup>1</sup> ASTLEY's *Voyages*, i, p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> [About fifty miles beyond the river Senegal (MAJOR).]

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it was not very strong in the affections of the people, and must have been, comparatively, a recent introduction.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps there is hardly anything which tells more of the condition and the skill of a people than their markets. According to Ca da Mosto, the markets in Budomel's country indicated the poverty of the people, and showed that they had not advanced beyond the state of barter in their commercial transactions.<sup>2</sup>

Ca da Mosto left Budomel's country, and sailing southwards, came to the river Gambia (now called Gambia), which the voyagers entered, but could not succeed in conciliating the inhabitants. A contest ensued, which deserves to be recorded as an instance of signal valour, of almost unparalleled valour, considering that the arms used by the Europeans were totally unknown to their opponents.

"The Almadias came under the prow of Ca da Mosto's ship, which was foremost; and, dividing themselves into two divisions, took him in their centre. This gave him an opportunity to tell their number, which was fifteen,

<sup>1</sup> "Towards evening, Budomel ordered the Azanaghi or Arabs, whom he always has about him, to say prayers. His manner was thus:—Being entered into the mosque (which was in one of the courts) with some of the principal negroes, he first stood with his eyes lifted up, then he advanced two steps, and spoke a few words softly; after which, he stretched himself on the ground and kissed it. The Azanaghi, and all the rest, did the same. Then rising, he repeated the same acts over again, ten or twelve times, which took up half an hour. When he had done, he asked the author's opinion of their manner of worship; and to give him some account of his own religion. Hereupon Ca da Mosto told him, in presence of his doctors, that the religion of Mohammed was false; and the Romish, the true one. This made the Arabs mad, and Budomel laugh; who, on this occasion, said, that he looked upon the religion of the Europeans to be good: for that none but God could have given them so much riches and understanding. He added, however, that the Mohammedan Law must be also good; and that he believed the negroes were more sure of salvation than the Christians, because God was a just Lord; and therefore, as he had given the latter paradise in this world, it ought to be possessed in the world to come by the negroes, who had scarce anything here, in comparison of the others."—ASTLEY'S *Voyages*, i, p. 584.

<sup>2</sup> "He, Ca da Mosto, went three or four times to see one of their markets or fairs, which was kept on Mondays and Fridays in a meadow, not far from the place where he was lodged. Hither repaired, with their wares, both men and women, for four or five miles about; and

and as large as barks. They ceased to row, raised their oars, and looked upon the caravel with wonder. There were between an hundred and thirty and an hundred and fifty negroes, all well made, of a good size and very black. They wore white cotton shirts on their bodies, and white caps on their heads, like the Germans, but with a wing on each side, and a feather in the middle, by which they distinguished themselves to be soldiers of war. At the prow of each *Almadia*, there stood a negro with a round target, which seemed to be of leather, on his arm; yet they neither attacked the caravel, nor she them.

"Thus they continued peaceably till they saw the other two ships bear down on them. Then they prepared, dropped their oars, and without any further ceremony shot their arrows at them. The ships, seeing the attack made upon them, discharged four pieces of cannon at the enemy: the report whereof so stupefied them, that they threw down their bows; and, looking some time one way, and some time another, remained surprized to see the stones, shot by the cannon, fall in the water near them. They continued in this suspense for a considerable while: but, seeing the cannon fired no more at them, plucked up courage, and, laying hold of their bows, renewed the fight with great fury, approaching within a stone's throw of the ships. Hereupon the sailors began to discharge their cross-bows at them. The first shot was made by the bastard son of the Genoese gentleman, which, hitting a negro in the breast, he immediately dropped down dead. Those in the *Almadia* took up the dart and gazed at it with wonder, but did not give over the attack, which they carried on vigorously, and were as courageously opposed

those who lived at a greater distance, went to other markets near them. The great poverty of this people appeared in the goods found in these fairs; which were, a few pieces of cotton-cloth, cotton-yarn, pulse, oil, millet, wooden-tubs, palm-mats, and everything else for the use of life. Here also one meets with arms, and small quantities of gold. As they have no money or coin of any kind, all trade is carried on by way of barter; exchanging one thing for another, according to the different values. These blacks, both men and women, came to gaze on *Ca da Mosto*, as if he had been a prodigy; and thought it a great curiosity to behold a white man, for they had never seen any before."—*ASTLEY'S Voyages*, i, p. 587.

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by the caravels; insomuch, that in a little time many of them were killed, without the loss of one European. The negroes observing the disadvantage they laboured under, all the Almadias agreed to attack the little caravel in stern, which was both ill-manned and ill-armed. They executed this design with great fury: which Ca da Mosto observing, he moved forward to her assistance; and getting her between the two large caravels, they all discharged their cannon and cross-bows at the Almadias, which made them retire."<sup>1</sup>

During their stay in the river Gambia, Ca da Mosto and his companions saw the constellation of the Southern Cross for the first time. Finding that the natives would have nothing to do with them, for they believed that the Christians were very bad people, and bought negroes to eat them, Ca da Mosto and the other commanders wished to proceed a hundred miles further up the river; but the common sailors would not hear of it, and the expedition forthwith returned to Portugal.

In 1456, Ca da Mosto made another voyage, in the course of which he discovered the Cape de Verde Islands. Leaving them, he went again to the Gambia river, which he ascended much further than he had done during his previous expedition, and he also succeeded on this occasion in conciliating the natives. The voyagers entered what they called, the "Lord Battimansa's"<sup>2</sup> territory, and sought to make a treaty with him. It is curious to see the nature of the commodities dealt in. The fact of the cottons being coloured would seem to indicate an advance in civilisation, but it is to be recollected that in all torrid countries, the desire for colour is very great.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ASTLEY'S *Voyages*, i, p. 590.

<sup>2</sup> [Batti Mansa—i.e. King Batti, "Mansa being the Mandingo for King" (MAJOR).]

<sup>3</sup> "As soon as the messengers had declared their commission, Battimansa immediately ordered certain negroes to the caravel; with whom they not only entered into a treaty of friendship, but also bartered several things for negro-slaves, and some gold. They value their gold as a very precious thing, and at a greater rate than the Portuguese did; yet, for all that, the latter had it very reasonably, since they gave them for it things of very little value.

"They traded with cotton and cotton-yarn. Some pieces were all white; others striped with blue and white; and a third sort, with red,



## CHARACTER OF PRINCE HENRY 39

Leaving the river Gambia, Ca da Mosto and his company went down the coast, discovered Cape Roxo, and afterwards sailed up the Rio Grande; but for want of any knowledge of the language of the people, they were forced to return to Portugal.

Some time between 1460 and 1464, an expedition went out under Pedro de Cintra, one of the King of Portugal's gentlemen, to make further discoveries along the African coast.<sup>1</sup> These voyagers, whose story is briefly told by Ca da Mosto, discovered Sierra Leone (so called on account of the roaring thunder heard there), and went a little beyond Cape Mesurado. The historian Barros says, that the African coast from Cape Bojador to Sierra Leone, was discovered in Prince Henry's time, in which case it seems probable that this voyage of Pedro de Cintra's was before the Prince's death; but Ca da Mosto (whose authority is, I think, of more weight) places it later.<sup>2</sup> However that may be, we may fairly consider Sierra Leone as being the point of discovery attained at, or about, the death of Prince Henry, of whose character, before parting with him in this history, something deserves to be said.

"He had a grandeur of nature," says Faria y Sousa, "proportionate to the greatness of his doings; he was bulky and strong; his complexion red and white; his hair coarse, and almost hirsute; his aspect produced fear in those who were not accustomed to him; not to those who were, for even in the strongest current of his vexation at anything, his courtesy always prevailed over his anger; he had a grave serenity in his movements, a notable constancy and circumspection in his words, modesty in all that related to his state and personal observance, within the limits of his high fortune; he was patient in

blue and white stripes, very well wrought. They likewise brought civet, and civet-cat skins, monkeys, large and small baboons of various sorts: which, being very plenty, they sold them cheap, that is, for something not exceeding ten marquets a head; and the ounce of civet, for what was not worth more than forty or fifty (marquets): not that they sold the things by weight; but the author judged it to be about that quantity."—ASTLEY'S *Voyages*, i, p. 594.

<sup>1</sup> [In 1461. He nearly reached La Mina.]

<sup>2</sup> [Prince Henry died 13th November 1460.]

labour, bold and valorous in war, versed in arts and letters; a skilful fencer; in the mathematics superior to all men of his time; generous in the extreme; zealous in the extreme for the increase of the Faith. No bad habit was known in him. He did not marry, nor was it known that he ever violated the purity of continency. His memory was equal to the authority he bore, and his prudence equal to his memory. He died at Sagres, in the year one thousand four hundred and sixty-three, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and lies with his father in the most illustrious church of Batalha."<sup>1</sup>

The above is of the class of characters, somewhat unqualified and general, which historians are wont to give; but, I believe, it is one of the truest of its kind. It lacks, however, those slight touches and variations in which so much of individual resemblance consists. We may map down the main qualities of a man, one by one; but this alone will hardly suffice to convey to us such a complex, perverse, varying, dubious thing as any one human character. Fortunately, in this case, we are enabled from the chronicler Azurara, who evidently knew the Prince well, and speaks with perfect honesty about him, to supply two or three of those little niceties of description, which give life and reality to the picture. Azurara says, that the Prince was a man "of great counsel and authority, wise and of good memory, but in some things slow, whether it was through the prevalence of the phlegmatic temperament in his constitution, or from intentional deliberation, being moved to some end which men did not perceive."<sup>2</sup>

His portrait confirms the latter hypothesis, giving the idea of a man of great deliberation, but with no laxity of purpose: and we may notice how this would agree with the story of his apparently sudden resolve in sending out his first expedition, a thing with him probably long thought of, little talked of, and rapidly put in execution. Again, in another place, the chronicler hints at a defect in the Prince, where he says, "There was no hatred known in him, nor ill-will against any person, however

<sup>1</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA, tom. 1, part 1, cap. 1.

<sup>2</sup> AZURARA, cap. 4.

great the injury he had received from him; and such was his benignity in this respect, that judicious men remarked against him that he was deficient in distributive justice (*justiça distributiva*), for, in all other respects, he conducted himself justly." There are instances in his conduct which bear out this, and one especially, in which he is stated to have overlooked the desertion of his banner, on an occasion<sup>1</sup> of great peril to himself, and afterwards to have unjustly favoured the persons who had thus been found wanting in courage. This, no doubt, was an error on his part, but at least it was an heroic one, such as belonged to the first Cæsar; and in the estimation of the Prince's followers, it probably added to their liking for the man what little it may have taken away from their confidence in the precision of his justice as a commander.

We learn, from the same authority, that his house was the resort of all the good men of the kingdom, and of foreigners, and that he was a man of intense labour and study. "Often the sun found him in that same place where it had left him the day before, he having watched throughout the whole arc of the night without any rest."<sup>2</sup>

Altogether, whether we consider this Prince's motives, his objects, his deeds, or his mode of life, we must acknowledge him to be one of the most notable men, not merely of his own country and period, but of modern times and of all nations, and one upon whose shoulders might worthily rest the arduous beginnings of continuous maritime discovery. Would that such men remained to govern the lands they have the courageous foresight to discover! Then, indeed, they might take to themselves the motto, *talant de bien faire*, which this Prince, their great leader, caused to be inscribed by his captains in many a land, which as yet, at least, has not found much good from its introduction, under his auspices, to the civilization of an older world.

In the year 1469, perhaps in consequence of Prince Henry's superintendence of African discovery being missed, King Alfonso adopted a new system, and farmed out the commerce with the coast of Africa to a certain Fernando

<sup>1</sup> At Tangier.

<sup>2</sup> AZURARA, cap. 6.

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Gomez for five years, at one thousand ducats<sup>1</sup> a year, upon conditions, one of which was, that he should advance the discovery along the coast, beginning from Sierra Leone, three hundred miles in the course of each of the five years.<sup>2</sup> Fernando Gomez, by his captains Juan de Santarem and Pedro de Escobar, discovered the gold coast, which they called Oro de la Mina,<sup>3</sup> and gained great riches which he expended in aid of the King's expeditions against the Moors. He was in consequence ennobled, and received the name of El Mina. Fernando Po discovered an island, which was then called Formosa, but which is now known by the name of its discoverer. The last discovery in the life of King Alfonso was that of Cape Catharina.

Don Juan the Second succeeded his father Don Alfonso on the throne of Portugal.<sup>4</sup> The new King was very earnest in African discovery. He resolved that a fort should be built at La Mina; and for this purpose sent an expedition under Diego de Azambuja with five hundred soldiers, one hundred artisans, and the fort already constructed in separate pieces, as we now send out palaces for native chiefs, or lighthouses, to distant parts.

The account of the proceedings of this expedition is interesting. On the arrival of the ships at La Mina, Azambuja sprang on shore to take possession, fixed the Portuguese flag upon a tree, raised an altar at the foot of the tree, and caused the first mass to be said that was ever celebrated in those parts. The Portuguese commander then prepared to receive the negro King with due pomp. The King arrived, surrounded by a large company of his subjects, well armed. Their helmets, however, made of skins, were such as to provoke "more mirth than terror." Their King's arms and legs were covered with ornaments of gold. On his neck was a chain with bells suspended to it, like that of the first mule in a set. Before him went the band, with numerous and various instruments, pro-

<sup>1</sup> [Five hundred cruzados.]

<sup>2</sup> BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 2, cap. 2.

<sup>3</sup> [In 1470. In 1471 the Equator was crossed.]

<sup>4</sup> [In 1481.]

## SETTLEMENT OF LA MINA FOUNDED 43

ducing "more noise than harmony." The instruments were such as are well known,—timbrels, horns, and bells. At last the negro King himself arrived, "serene and severe"; and the Portuguese captain came forward to meet him, "magnificent in dress and grave in aspect." The King took the hand of the other in sign of peace, and the ceremonious part of the matter being ended, Azambuja made known the proposition he had brought from his master (here we must use the words of the historian), "which was to make the negro King understand first the way of the Catholic rites, and then to hide from him the way of our covetousness, asking leave to make a house in which our people could live; and force was to be used to compel them, if it should be necessary." "I do not," adds the candid historian, "imagine that I shall persuade the world that our intent was only to be preachers; but on the other hand the world must not fancy that our intent was merely to be traders."<sup>1</sup>

The Portuguese captain was listened to with "marvellous silence," and the proposition touching the Christian faith well received: the other about building a fort was listened to very coldly. The negro King was not so dull as to be without an unpleasant foresight of what evil consequences such an occupation of his country might lead to. However, the Portuguese captain pressed the point, and the negro King conceding it, quitted the place of conference. The Portuguese artizans forthwith began their work, but unfortunately commenced upon a rock that was held sacred by the natives, who immediately rushed to the defence of the holy ground. Azambuja diverted this danger by an instant distribution of presents, which soothed the negroes completely, thus verifying the proverb, says the historian, that "gifts break through rocks." The castle was built, and called the fort of St George. Azambuja being made lieutenant, ruled for three years, and came out of his employment with applause, "a difficult thing to attain amongst the Portuguese." The writer might have added, and amongst all people; for delegated authority has always within it the elements of decay and disapprobation—meeting with that criticism and super-

<sup>1</sup> FARIA Y SOUSA, tom. 1, part 1, cap. 3.

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vision, when in the full force of its existence, which, in the case of other authority, is often postponed until after its decease.

The King of Portugal about this time took the title of "Lord of Guinea," and desired his captains to leave formal notice of their discoveries at the place of discovery: to set up stones, declaring "the king, the captain, and the time; by whose order, by whom, and when" the discovery was made. The first captain sent out after this order was Diego Cam<sup>1</sup>; whom Martin Behaim (Martin of Bohemia), a celebrated astronomer and geographer of those times, is said to have accompanied. They discovered the kingdom of Congo; and at the request of the King, took back some of the sons of the principal men to be baptized, and to learn the Christian faith.<sup>2</sup> Diego Cam was also the bearer of a request from this negro King, that priests should be sent to his dominions. The King of Benin, a territory between the Gold Coast and Congo, made at this time a similar request, by an ambassador sent to the King of Portugal. This ambassador, while at Lisbon, happened to speak about a greater power in Africa than his master, to whom indeed his master was but the vassal, which instantly set the Portuguese King thinking about Prester John—the search after whom is in the annals of maritime discovery, what the alchemists' pursuit after the great Arcanum was in chemistry. The King concluded that this greater power must be Prester John; and accordingly Bartholomew Diaz and two other captains were sent out on further discovery.<sup>3</sup> They did not find Prester John, but made their way southwards along a thousand and fifty miles of new coast, as far as a cape which, from experience, they called Cape Stormy, but which their master, seeing in its discovery an omen of better things, re-named as the Cape of Good Hope.

It is a fact of great historical interest, and a singular link between African and American discovery, that Bartholomew

<sup>1</sup> [In 1484.]

<sup>2</sup> [The pillars referred to in the text were called "Padrões." Diego Cam set up one on the south side of a river he named in consequence the Rio do Padrão, but which is now called the Congo.]

<sup>3</sup> [In 1486.]

Columbus was engaged in this voyage. The authority for this important statement is Las Casas, who says that he found, in a book belonging to Christopher Columbus, being one of the works of Cardinal d'Ailly, a note "in Bartolomé Colon's handwriting," which he knew well, having several of his letters and papers concerning this voyage in his own possession,<sup>1</sup> which note gives a short account in bad Latin of the voyage, mentions the degree of latitude of the Cape, and concludes with the words, "*in quibus omnibus interfui.*"

In fiction, too, this voyage of Bartholomew Diaz was very notable, as it presented an occasion for the writing of one of the most celebrated passages in modern poetry; a passage not easily to be surpassed for its majesty and tenderness, and for a beauty which even those tiresome allusions to the classics, that gave a faded air to so much of the poetry of the sixteenth century, cannot seriously disfigure, nor obscure.

It is to be found in the *Lusiadas* of Camões; and indicates the culminating point of Portuguese discovery in Africa, as celebrated by the national poet.

Just as the mariners approach the Cape, a cloud rises, darkens the air, and then discloses a monstrous giant, with deep-set, caverned eyes, of rugged countenance and pallid earthy colour, vast as that statue of Apollo, the colossal wonder of the world. In solemn language this awful shape pours forth disastrous prophecies, and threatens his highest vengeance on those who have discovered him—maledictions which, alas! may be securely uttered against those who accomplish aught that is bolder than has hitherto been attempted by their fellow-men.

When vexed by the question "Who art thou?" the "stupendous body" harshly and mournfully replies, that he is that great Stormy Cape, hitherto hidden from

<sup>1</sup> "Which I know very well, and have now many charts and letters of his concerning this voyage."—LAS CASAS. [Expert opinion is much divided on this point. Some scholars hold that Las Casas was mistaken, that the writing is that of Christopher, not Bartholomew, Columbus, and, as Christopher cannot possibly have sailed with Diaz, the concluding words, "in all of which I took part," simply refer to the arrival of Diaz, and subsequent proceedings at Lisbon, where Christopher was then perhaps staying.]

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mankind, whom their boldness in discovering much offends.<sup>1</sup>

He then relates the touching story of his love : how he was Adamastor, of the race of Titans ; and how he loved Thetis the fairest being of the sea ; and how, deceived by the (magic) arts of her, "who was the life of this body," he found himself caressing a rough and horrid crag instead of her sweet, soft countenance ; and how, crazed by grief and by dishonour, he wandered forth to seek another world, where no one should behold him and mock his misery ; how still the vengeance of the gods pursued him ; and how he felt his flesh gradually turning into a rock, and his members extending themselves among the long waves ; and how, for ever to increase his agony, the beautiful Thetis still encircled him.

Having told his grief, he made himself into a dark cloud (*Desfes-se a nuvem negra*), and the sea roared far off with a sonorous sound. And then the Portuguese mariner lifted up his hands in prayer to the sacred chorus of angels, who had guided the vessel so long on its way, and prayed God to remove the fulfilment of the evil things which Adamastor had prophesied against his nation.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 " Eu sou aquella occulto, é grande Cabo,  
A quem chamais vós outros Tormentorio,  
Que nunca á Ptolomeo, Pomponio, Estrabo  
Plinio é quantos passaram, fui notorio :  
Aqui toda a Africana costa acabo  
Neste meu nunca vista promontorio,  
Que para o polo Antartico se estende,  
A quem vossa ousadia tanta offende."

CAMÕES, *Os Lusíadas*, V. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Vasco de Gama is made by Camöens, using more than poetic licence in favour of his hero, to appropriate the episode of Adamastor to himself. It seems hard, however, to take away any honour from Bartholomew Diaz, who, according to the learned Maffei, appears to have had the greatest difficulty in contending with his own men as well as with the fury of the elements, before he succeeded in discovering that "insane headland" which was to make his voyage for ever memorable. The words of Maffei, who had ample access to Portuguese state-papers, are as follows :—

"He was a long time struggling not only with winds and seas, but also with his seamen, weary of a most long and tedious navigation, and coming back to him every day with taunts and importunities, which he, with harshness or gentle and good-natured arguments, appeased. The columns of Cam (see p. 44) being passed by a great



## OTHER PORTUGUESE EXPEDITIONS 47

The Genius of the Stormy Cape might have taken up a direr song of prophecy against the inhabitants of the unfortunate land of which he formed so conspicuous and mournful a prominence.

Maritime discovery had now, by slow and painful degrees, proceeded down the coast of Africa nearly to the southernmost point, and from thence will soon be curving round in due course to India. But expeditions by sea were not the only modes of discovery undertaken by the Portuguese in the reign of John the Second of Portugal. Pedro de Covilham and Alfonso de Paiva went on an enterprize of discovery mainly by land.<sup>1</sup> The latter died at Cairo: the former made his way to Cananor, Calicut, and Goa, and thence back to Cairo, where he found that his companion had died. He then set out again, and eventually came into the kingdom of Shoa,<sup>2</sup> to the court of "the King of Habbesh," who fulfilled sufficiently in Covilham's eyes the idea of Prester John, and was accordingly called so. It is a curious coincidence that an ambassador from the King of Habbesh, called Lucas Marcos, a priest of that country, came about this time to Rome, and afterwards to Lisbon, which circumstance gave a new impetus to all the King of Portugal's "hopes, wishes, and endeavours."<sup>3</sup>

A more remarkable person, even, than an ambassador from Prester John, arrived nearly at the same time at Lisbon. This was Bemoin, Prince of Jalof. Bemoin came to seek the protection of the King of Portugal, and the reason of his coming was as follows. He was the brother, on his mother's side, of Brian, King of Jalof. This King was inert and vicious. He had, however, the wisdom to make Bemoin prime minister, and to throw all the cares

distance, that insane headland (*insanum terre projectum*) at length appeared."—J. P. MAFFEI, Bergomatis, *Historiarum Indicarum*, libri xvi, Cologne, 1589, p. 15.

<sup>1</sup> [In 1487.]

<sup>2</sup> [Abyssinia. Covilham was not allowed to leave, and passed the remaining thirty-three years of his life there.]

<sup>3</sup> [Simultaneously with the travels of De Covilham and Bartholomew Diaz, a Portuguese exploring expedition, under Martim Lopes, was sent to the north-east and discovered Nova Zembla.]

and troubles of governing upon him. Nothing was heard in the kingdom but of Bemoin. But he, seeing perhaps the insecurity of his position, diligently made friends with the Portuguese, keeping aloof, however, from becoming a convert, though he listened respectfully to those who expounded the Christian faith to him. Cibitab, a brother of the inert Brian, by the father's side, became jealous of Bemoin, revolted, killed Brian, and vanquished Bemoin, who thereupon threw himself upon the protection of his Portuguese friends, and came to Lisbon.

Bemoin was received magnificently by King John of Portugal. The negro Prince had formerly alleged that one of his reasons for not becoming a Christian was the fear of disgusting his followers; but being in Portugal that reason no longer held good, and he became a convert, being baptized as Don John Bemoin, having King John for a godfather.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-four of Bemoin's gentlemen received baptism after him. This is the account of his reception. "Bemoin, because he was a man of large size and fine presence, about forty years old, with a long and well-arranged beard, appeared indeed not like a barbarous pagan, but as one of our own princes, to whom all honour and reverence were due. With equal majesty and gravity of demeanour he commenced and finished his oration, using such inducements to make men bewail his sad fortune in exile, that only seeing these natural signs of sorrow, people comprehended what the interpreter afterwards said. Having finished the statement of his case as a good orator would, in declaring that his only remedy and only hope was in the greatness and generosity of the king, with whom he spoke aside for a short time, he was answered by the king in few words, so much to his satisfaction that immediately it made a change in his whole look, spirits, and bearing, rendering him most joyous. Taking leave of the king, he went to kiss the queen's hand, and then that of the prince, to whom he said a few words, at the end of which he prayed the prince that he would intercede in his favour with the king. And thence he was conducted to his lodgings by all the nobility that accompanied him."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [On 3rd December 1489.]

<sup>2</sup> BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 3, cap. 6.

After this, Bemoin had many conversations with the King, and always acquitted himself well.<sup>1</sup> Amongst other things he gave information respecting various African nations, and especially of the king of a Jewish people who in many things resembled Christians. Here again the Portuguese monarch was delighted at finding himself upon the traces of Prester John.

It must not be forgotten to mention, that the King made great rejoicings in honour of Bemoin's conversion, on which occasion, the negro Prince's attendants performed singular feats on horseback.

Bemoin maintained his favour at the Portuguese court, and succeeded in his object of obtaining military assistance. He was sent back to his own country with a Portuguese squadron of twenty caravels, which had for its instructions, besides his restitution, to found a fort on the banks of the river Senegal.

The Portuguese arrived at the river, and began building the fort; but are said to have chosen an unhealthy spot to build on. Whether they could have chosen a healthy one is doubtful. The commander, however, Pedro Vaz, thought that there was treachery on Bemoin's part, and killed him with the blow of a dagger on board his vessel. The building was discontinued, and Pedro Vaz returned to Portugal, where he found the King excessively vexed and displeased at the fate of Bemoin.<sup>2</sup>

The story of this negro Prince is interesting, not that it carries forward the history much, but it and other such narratives show what were the temper, manners, and disposition of Europeans and Africans towards each other at that period; and go far to indicate what good results to the inhabitants of both continents might have proceeded from their peaceful intercourse.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Showing himself gifted with a very clear understanding."—BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 3, cap. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Faria y Sousa dismisses the matter with the following pithy remark. "The way to heaven by the Portuguese hand (baptism) came dear to Bemoin: and more so, if by chance it was hidden from him, by his despair at finding so little faith in one who sought to teach him the true faith."

<sup>3</sup> The kindly treatment, which the first negroes who were brought into Spain experienced from their masters, is mentioned in the *Annals*

## 50 SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA

King John the Second was more successful in converting the inhabitants of Congo, than he had been with those of Jalof. The ambassador from Congo, having spent two years at Lisbon, during which his attendants learnt the Portuguese language and were instructed in Christian doctrine, was sent back to his own country with three Portuguese vessels. The Portuguese were well received: mass was performed in the midst of thousands of negroes; a church was built; and the King of Congo became Christian, and took the name of John. He had occasion at that time to make war against a neighbouring people; and sallying forth with a cross depicted on his banner, he was victorious. After this, the Portuguese expedition, which seems to have come out for no other purpose than to introduce Christianity into Congo, returned, leaving persons capable of continuing the work of conversion. The old negro King soon grew a little cold towards Christianity, disliking much its interference with his doctrine and practice, as regarded the plurality of wives. He had two sons: the elder approving, and the other disapproving, of the new faith. The King himself inclined to the faction of his pagan younger son; and the other was disinherited. On the death of the old monarch, the younger son suddenly attacked his brother, who had only about him thirty-seven followers, Portuguese and negroes. However, under the Christian banner, and probably with some little aid of Christian discipline, the elder vanquished his younger brother with all his host, became king, and did his best to establish Christianity throughout his dominions.

This King of Congo reigned fifty years: he was not only a warm favourer of Christianity, but an active preacher, having qualified himself by learning the Portuguese language and by studying the Scriptures. He sent his children and grandchildren over to Portugal; had them well taught both in Latin and Portuguese; and of his own

*of Seville* before referred to. It appears that in the chronicler's time, A.D. 1677, they had still a chapel of their own. "His name (the negro count's) was perpetuated in a street and enclosures outside the Carmona Gate, in the outskirts of the city, where the negroes have a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of los Angeles."—*Annales de Seville*.

lineage there were two bishops in his kingdom. Barros tells us, that all these things were done at the expense of the kings of Portugal.<sup>1</sup> A very noble undertaking it was of theirs: and in the present state of that kingdom, these are the works which may console the Portuguese nation and their rulers with a not unbecoming recollection of past greatness, and, perhaps, animate them to great deeds again.

The historian may now stop in his task of tracing Portuguese discovery along the coast of Africa. We have seen it making its way with quiet perseverance, for seventy years, from Cape Nam to the Cape of Good Hope, a distance of some six thousand miles.<sup>2</sup> This long course of discovery has been almost entirely thrown into shade by the more daring and brilliant discovery of America, which we have now to enter upon. Yet these proceedings on the African coast had in them all the energy, perseverance, and courage which distinguished American discovery. Prince Henry himself was hardly a less personage than Columbus. They had different elements to contend in. But the man whom princely wealth and position, and the temptation to intrigue which there must have been in the then state of the Portuguese court, never induced to swerve from the one purpose which he maintained for forty years, unshaken by popular clamour, however sorely vexed he might be with inward doubts and misgivings; who passed laborious days and watchful nights, in devotion to this one purpose—enduring the occasional shortcomings of his agents with that forbearance which springs from a care for the enterprize in hand, so deep as to control private vexation (the very same motive which made Columbus bear so mildly with insult and contumely from his followers)—such a man is worthy to be put in comparison with the other great discoverer who worked out his enterprize through poverty, neglect, sore travail, and the vicissitudes of courts. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that Prince Henry was undoubtedly the father of modern geographical discovery, and that the result of his

<sup>1</sup> BARROS, d. 1, l. 3, c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> That is, taking the coast line.

exertions must have given much impulse to Columbus, if it did not first move him to his great undertaking. After the above eulogium on Prince Henry, which is not the least more than he merited, his kinsmen, the contemporary Portuguese monarchs, should come in for their share of honourable mention, as they seem to have done their part in African discovery with much vigour, without jealousy of Prince Henry, and with high and noble aims. It would also be but just to include in some part of this praise the many brave captains who distinguished themselves in these enterprises.

The rediscovery of America (I say "rediscovery," because there is no doubt that it was discovered by the Northmen in the ninth and tenth centuries), just at the time when the whole of the western coast of Africa had been made out by the Portuguese, appears to us, humanly speaking, to have furnished a most inopportune conjuncture for evil. Had America not afforded a market for slaves, we hardly see where else it could have grown up at that period, and if it had not grown up then, legitimate commerce would have come in its place, and prevented any such trade. Black slaves might have been, for some time a favourite part of the grandeur of a great household, but we do not see how they could have occupied a country already stocked with hardy labourers, fitted for the soil, as was the case with Europe. Ca da Mosto, as before mentioned, states that in 1455, the export of slaves from Africa was between seven and eight hundred yearly. Seeing how careless people are in the use of numbers, so that shrewd men of the world mostly divide by two or three the account in numbers of everything they hear, except ruined men's accounts of their own debts and engagements, it is not improbable that Ca da Mosto gives an exaggerated statement of the number of slaves exported, which at the most is but a small affair, when compared with the immense exportations of modern days. Moreover, from what is mentioned of the voyages undertaken from that time to the one we are now speaking of, i.e. from 1455 to 1492, it may be concluded that the trade in slaves had fallen off, so seldom are they mentioned,

while at the same time there are signs of other articles of commerce engaging the attention of the Portuguese.<sup>1</sup>

Leaving now, for a while, all mention of Portuguese affairs, we commence the chapter of that man's doings who, when last heard of, was mentioned, incidentally, as the son-in-law of Perestrelo and as living at Porto Santo; but whose name was now about to become one of the few which carry on from period to period the tidings of the world's great story, as beacon fires upon the mountain tops. There is a singular fascination in the account of such a deed as the discovery of America, which cannot be done any more, nor anything like it—which stands alone in the doings of the world. We naturally expect to find something quite peculiar in the man who did it, who was indeed one of the great spirits of the earth, but still of the same order of soul to which great inventors and discoverers have mostly belonged. Lower down, too, in mankind there is much of the same nature leading to various kinds of worthy deeds, though there are no more continents for it to discover.

But to return to the renowned personage of whom we are speaking. There was great simplicity about him, and much loyalty and veneration. The truly great are apt to believe in the greatness of others, and so to be loyal in their relations here; while, for what is beyond here, a large measure of veneration belongs to them, as having a finer and more habitually present consciousness than most men, of something infinitely above what even their imaginations can compass. He was as magnanimous as it was possible, perhaps, for so sensitive and impassioned a person to be. He was humane, self-denying, courteous. He had an intellect of that largely-enquiring kind which may remind us of our great English philosopher, Bacon.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The King Don Juan II., considering that in the newly-discovered countries there were riches that would augment his revenues, and seeing that the inhabitants were disposed to accept our rule, ordered a fort to be built in that place called La Mina, where gold was obtained by trade."—FARIA Y SOUSA, i, part 1, cap. 3.

<sup>2</sup> One, who of all living men, has perhaps the best right to pronounce upon an intellect of a "largely-enquiring kind," has thus described the intelligence of Columbus when applied to the observation of nature—"That which characterised Columbus is the penetration and wonderful

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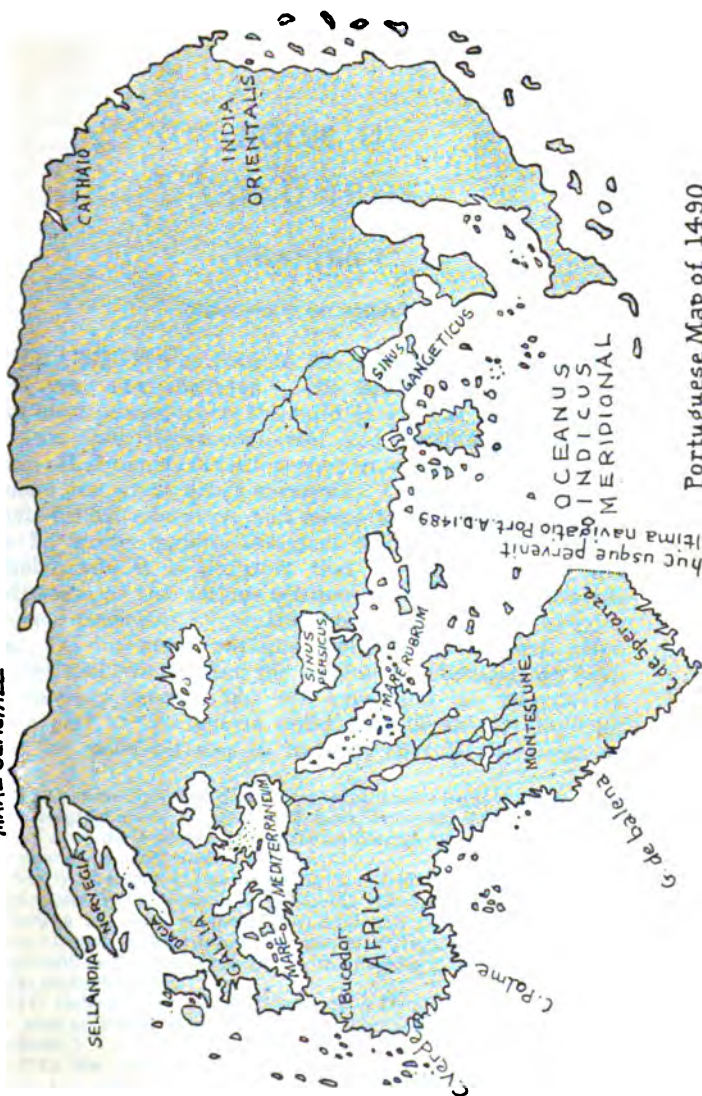
He was singularly resolute, and enduring. The Spaniards have a word, *longanimidad*, which has been well applied in describing him, as it signifies greatness and constancy of mind in adversity. He was rapt in his designs, having a ringing for ever in his ears of great projects, making him deaf to much, perhaps, that prudence might have heeded;—one to be loved by those near him, and likely by his presence to inspire favour and respect.

Such was the hero under whose guidance we are now called to enter upon a wider sphere of the history of discovery and colonization; and also, somewhat to his shame, of the mournful annals of Slavery.

keenness with which he seized the phenomena of the external world. He is altogether as remarkable as an observer of nature as he is an intrepid navigator. Arrived under a new sky and on a new earth (*comme si viage nuevo al nuevo cielo y mundo*, he wrote to the nurse of the Infant Don Juan), the configuration of the land, the appearance of the vegetation, the habits of the animals, the distribution of heat, the ocean currents, the variations of terrestrial magnetism,—nothing escaped his sagacity. Seeking eagerly the spices of India, and rhubarb, rendered celebrated by the Arab physicians, by Rubriquis and the Italian travellers, he examined minutely the fruits and leaves of plants. In the Conifers he distinguished the true pines, similar to those of Spain, and the monocarpal pines—that is to say, he recognised before L'Héritier the genus *Podocarpus*."—HUMBOLDT, *Examen Critique*, iii, p. 20. Paris, 1837.



MARE GLACIALE



Portuguese Map of 1490



## BOOK II

# COLUMBUS

### CHAPTER I

#### DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

**C**OLUMBUS was born in the Genoese territory in the year 1447, or 1448.<sup>1</sup> His family was obscure, but, like most others, when the light of a great man's birth is thrown upon its records, real and possible, it presents some other names not altogether unworthy to be inscribed among the great man's ancestors. Columbus was sent to Pavia for his education, and seems to have profited by it; for he wrote legibly, designed well, was a good Latin scholar, and it is probable that he then acquired the rudiments of the various sciences in which he afterwards became proficient.<sup>2</sup> At the age of fourteen he went to sea. Of his many voyages, which of them took place before, and which after, his coming to Portugal, we have no distinct record; but are sure that he traversed a large part of the known world, that he visited England, that he made his way to Iceland,<sup>3</sup> that he had been at

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that this date differs considerably from those given by some biographers of Columbus: I have, however, determined it for myself upon the evidence of ancient authorities which seemed to me the most to be relied upon.

[Nearly all recent writers of weight, except Mr J. Fiske, basing their conclusions on the researches of Mr H. Harris, have decided that Columbus was born between May 1446 and November 1447. Mr Fiske (*Discovery of America*, i, p. 342, *et seq.*) agrees with Navarrete, Humboldt, and Washington Irving, in adopting 1436, or thereabouts, as the probable date.]

<sup>2</sup> [P. Gaffarel (*Hist. de la Découverte de l'Amérique*, ii, p. 14) doubts the stay at Pavia, and describes his scientific attainments as only mediocre.]

<sup>3</sup> "In the month of February of the year 1477 I navigated a hundred leagues beyond Thule an island of which the southern side

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El Mina, on the coast of Africa,<sup>1</sup> and had seen the islands of the Grecian Archipelago.<sup>2</sup> He also mentions having been employed by King René of Provence, to intercept a Venetian galliot.<sup>3</sup> The next thing that we may say we know for certain of him is, that he went to Portugal, where he married Donna Felipa Mufiz Perestrelo; and he is said to have been shown by his mother-in-law the papers of her deceased husband, the first governor of Porto Santo.<sup>4</sup> Indeed Columbus lived in this little island<sup>5</sup> for some time; and it is a curious fact that the great chief of American discoverers should thus have inhabited a spot which was the first advanced outpost in African discovery. He also made voyages to different parts of Africa in company with Portuguese mariners.

At what precise period his great idea came into his mind there are no records to show. The continuous

is 73 degrees from the equator and not 63 as some say . . . to this island, which is as large as England, the English go with merchandise, especially from Bristol."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxii, p. 48.

<sup>1</sup> "I have sojourned in the fortress of San Jorge de la Mina, belonging to the King of Portugal, which is situated under the equator; and I can attest that these regions are in no way uninhabitable, as some have maintained."—*Hist. del Almirante Christ. Colon.* cap. 4.

[Modern French writers have claimed that San Jorge was a fourteenth-century French settlement, deserted during the Hundred Years' War. It was re-settled by the Portuguese in 1482, and Sir Clements Markham (*Life of Columbus*) has suggested that Columbus sailed in the colonizing expedition under the command of Diogo d'Azambuja which left Lisbon in December 1481.]

<sup>2</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxii, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> [This story is now discredited. The two periods when King René might have employed him on active service were 1437-41 and 1459-60. In 1441 he was either not born, or but five years old; in 1460 he was fourteen or twenty-four, but in either case an obscure workman, not likely to be chosen to command a warship. The statement is only one reported by Fernando Columbus to have been made by his father, for which no original evidence now exists. Perhaps the incident happened to some one else of the same name (see HARRISSE, *Les Colombo de France et d'Italie*), or, as Sir Clements Markham suggests, the mistake was directly due to Fernando Columbus.]

<sup>4</sup> [Modern research has modified the version in the text. He married Felipa Moniz, niece of Isabel Moniz, wife of Bartholomew Perestrelo, governor of Porto Santo, who died in 1457. Family acquaintance may have given him access to Bartholomew Perestrelo's papers.]

<sup>5</sup> [The stay at Porto Santo has been questioned. See HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb*, Paris, 1884, i, p. 298.]

current of Portuguese discoveries had excited the mind of Europe, and must have greatly influenced Columbus, living in the midst of them. This may be said without in the least detracting from the merits of Columbus as a discoverer. In real life men do not spring from something baseless to something substantial, as people in sick dreams. A great invention or discovery is often like a daring leap, but it is from land to land, not from nothing to something: and if we look at the subject with this consideration fully before us, we shall probably admit that Columbus had as large a share in the merit of his discovery as most inventors, or discoverers, can lay claim to. If the idea which has rendered him famous was not in his mind at the outset of his career of investigation, at any rate he had from the first a desire for discovery, or, as he says himself, the wish to know the secrets of this world.<sup>1</sup> It may be a question whether this impulse soon brought him to his utmost height of survey, and that he then only applied to learning in order to confirm his first views; or whether the impulse merely carried him along, with growing perception of the great truth he was to prove, into deep thinking upon cosmographical studies, Portuguese discoveries, the dreams of learned men, the labours of former geographers, the dim prophetic notices of great unknown lands, and vague reports amongst mariners of drift wood seen on the seas. But at any rate, we know that he arrived at a fixed conclusion that there was a way by the West to the Indies, that he could discover this way, and so come to Cipango,<sup>2</sup> Cathay, the Grand Khan

<sup>1</sup> "From very early youth I took to sea service, and have continued in it until now, an occupation which makes him who follows it desire to know the secrets of this world. I have passed forty years in this calling, and have sailed everywhere, to the present time, where there is any navigation."—NAVARRETE, *Coleccion Diplomatica*, No. 140.

The *Coleccion Diplomatica* forms the second volume of the general work of M. Fernandez de Navarrete, entitled *Coleccion de los Viajes y Descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los Españoles desde fines del siglo XV.*, 5 vols. Madrid, 1825-37.

<sup>2</sup> Cipango, or Zipangu, is described as an island in Marco Polo's Travels (book 3, cap 2): "The name which is here, as well as in the British Museum and Berlin manuscripts, written *Zipangu*, in the Basle edition *Zipangri*, in the older Latin *Cyampagu*, and in the early Italian epitomes *Cimpagu*, is evidently intended for those islands which

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and all he had met with in the gorgeous descriptions of Marco Polo and other ancient authorities. We may not pretend to lay down the exact chronological order of the formation of the idea in his mind,—in fact to know more about it than he would probably have been able to tell us himself.

Of the works of learned men, that which, according to Ferdinand Columbus, had most weight with his father, was the *Cosmographia* of Cardinal Aliaco.<sup>1</sup> Columbus was also confirmed in his views of the existence of a western passage to the Indies by Paulo Toscanelli, the Florentine philosopher,<sup>2</sup> to whom much credit is due for the

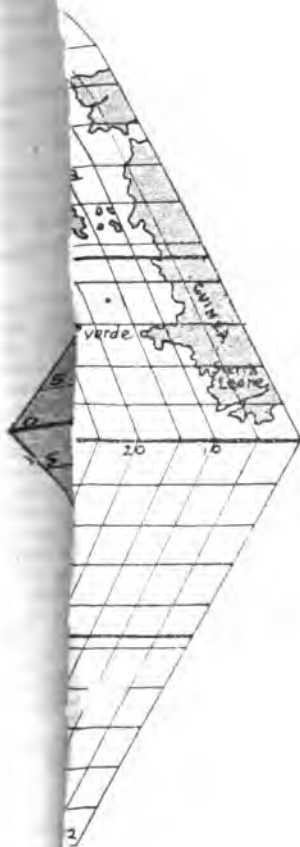
we in a collective sense term Japan.”—(See *Travels of Marco Polo*, by Wm. Marsden, 1818.) [See also Sir Hen. Yule, *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, London 1871, ii, p. 201, “Chipangu represents the Chinese Jih-pán-kwé, the kingdom of Japan, the name Jih-pán being a kind of translation of the native name Nippon, which is said to mean ‘the origin of the sun,’ or sun-rising, though that seems an improbable name for a people to give their own country.”]

From the pleadings in the cause between the Fiscal (the Treasury) of Spain and Don Diego Columbus, the son and heir of the great discoverer, we learn how this word Cipango, or Cipanso, was impressed upon the mind of Columbus. “To the next question he says that it is known undoubtedly that Christopher Columbus gave information of these Indies to Martin Alonso by the said writing, which he said was of the time of Solomon, and contained navigations along the Mediterranean to the farthest point of Spain; and from there going west for a certain time in a certain way, between north and south to ninety-five degrees, the land of *Cipanso* would be found on the way, a land so fertile and opulent, whose greatness could subjugate Africa and Europe.”—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*.

<sup>1</sup> [Cardinal Pierre d’Ailly, Bishop of Cambrai. His book was written in 1410.]

The following passage is particularly referred to by Ferdinand Columbus: “Aristotle says that the extent of sea is inconsiderable between the end of Spain on the west, and the beginning of India on the east. And he is not speaking of Hither Spain, now commonly called Spain, but of Further Spain, now called Africa.”—ALIACO, *Imago Mundi*, cap. viii.

<sup>2</sup> [Paolo Toscanelli, born in 1397 at Florence, was the most famous astronomer and cosmographer of his time. The immediate suggestion of a westward route to Asia was probably due to him rather than to any other contemporary. In 1474, when the Portuguese explorers found the coast of Africa trending continually southward, Alphonso V. directed a gentleman of his household to write to Toscanelli to inquire whether there was a probability of any shorter route to India. Toscanelli wrote an answer dated 25th June 1474. At some subsequent







encouragement he afforded to the enterprize. That the notices, however, of western lands were not such as to have much weight with other men, is sufficiently proved by the difficulty which Columbus had in contending with adverse geographers and men of science in general, of whom he says, he never was able to convince any one.<sup>1</sup> After a new world had been discovered, many scattered indications were then found to have foreshown it.

One thing which cannot be denied to Columbus, is, that he worked out his own idea himself. How he did so must now be told. He first applied himself to his countrymen the Genoese, who would have nothing to say to his scheme.<sup>2</sup> He then tried the Portuguese, who listened to what he had to say, but with bad faith sought to anticipate him by sending out a caravel with instruc-

period—various inquirers ascribe dates ranging between 1475 and 1482—Columbus wrote to him on the same subject, and, in reply, received a copy of the letter of 25th June 1474, and a chart. In this letter, which was meant to be shown to the king, he says, "You must begin to shape your course steadily westward," and he then goes on to describe the splendours of the East, taking his descriptions from Marco Polo. At the end he writes: "From the city of Lisbon, due west, there are twenty-six spaces marked on the map, each of which contains 250 miles as far as the very great and splendid city of Quinsay (Hang-Chow, for some time the capital of China) . . . this space is almost a third part of the whole sphere. . . . But from the island of Antilia, which you know, to the very splendid island of Cipango, there are ten spaces— . . . so through the unknown parts of the route the stretches of sea to be traversed are not great." The original map is now lost but a reconstruction is given here. See also the Introduction.]

<sup>1</sup> "Your Highnesses know that seven years were passed at your Court importuning fruitlessly. In all that time I never found a pilot mariner, philosopher, nor man of science, who did not declare my projects erroneous, and I received help from no one, except—after God—Friar Antonio de Marchena."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxii, p. 250.

[Thus Columbus—but some of his biographers take a different view. Commenting on this passage, Mr Harris writes (*Christophe Colomb devant l'Histoire*, Paris 1892, p. 46): "On the contrary, Columbus was received, encouraged, and aided by the greatest personages of Spain." Mr Justin Winsor (WINSOR, *History of America*, ii, cap. I, part I) criticises severely the general truthfulness, honesty, and trustworthiness of Columbus.]

<sup>2</sup> [On the authority of Muñoz (*Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*), quoting Ramusio, but the statement is now generally rejected.]

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tions founded upon his plan. The caravel, however, returned without having accomplished anything, the sailors not having had heart to venture far enough westward. It was not an enterprize to be carried out successfully by men who had only stolen the idea of it.

Columbus, disgusted at the treatment he had received from the Portuguese court, quitted Lisbon, and after visiting Genoa, as it appears, went to see what favour he could meet with in Spain, arriving at Palos in the year 1485.<sup>1</sup> He was fortunate enough to make a friend, ever afterwards true to him, in the Guardian of La Rabida, a Franciscan monastery near Palos.<sup>2</sup> Having entrusted his young son to the care of the good monk, Columbus made his way in January 1486 to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, then at Cordova. There Columbus found at once a friend in the Treasurer of the Household, Alonso de Quintanilla, a man who, like himself, took delight in great things (*que tenia gusto en cosas grandes*), and who obtained a hearing for him from the Spanish monarchs. They were then engaged in war against the Moors—a religious war<sup>3</sup>; and could not give more than a slight and superficial attention to a matter which must have seemed remote and most uncertain. Indeed, when it is considered, that the most pressing internal affairs of kingdoms are neglected<sup>4</sup> by the wisest rulers in times of war, it is wonderful that Columbus succeeded in obtaining any audience at all. Ferdinand and Isabella did not, however, dismiss him abruptly. On the contrary, it is said, they listened kindly; and the conference ended by their referring the business

<sup>1</sup> [Various dates, between the autumn of 1484 and the spring of 1486, are given for his arrival in Spain.]

<sup>2</sup> [Following Irving's *Columbus*, Sir Arthur Helps has converted two separate individuals into one (see p. 63). The friend made at this time was Fray Antonio de Marchena, referred to in the note on p. 59. The guardian or superior of Santa Maria de la Rabida was Juan Perez, who was afterwards to interfere with such decisive effect, but who was probably not then known to Columbus.]

<sup>3</sup> [The war with Granada—the final one against the Moors—had been carried on since 1481.]

<sup>4</sup> "Their Highnesses heard and understood only superficially on account of their incessant occupation in the business of the war; it is a general rule that when monarchs are at war they can give little attention to other things."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxii, p. 228.

to the Queen's Confessor, Fray Hernando de Talavera. This important functionary summoned a junta of cosmographers (not a promising assemblage!) to consult about the affair. They thought that so many persons wise in nautical matters as had preceded the Genoese mariner, never could have overlooked such an idea as that which had presented itself to his mind; moreover they had their own arguments against the scheme, amongst which was the not unnatural one, that Columbus, after he had descended the hemisphere, would not be able to ascend again, for it would be like getting up a mountain, as they said. In fine, they decided that this scheme of the Genoese mariner was "vain and impossible, and that it did not belong to the majesty of such great Princes to determine anything upon such weak grounds of information."<sup>1</sup>

Ferdinand and Isabella seem not to have taken the extremely unfavourable view of the matter entertained by the junta of cosmographers, or at least, to have been willing to dismiss Columbus gently; for they merely said, that with the wars at present on their hands, and especially that of Granada, they could not undertake any new expenses, but when that war was ended, they would examine his plan more carefully.<sup>2</sup>

Thus ended a solicitation at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, which, according to some authorities, had lasted five years; for the facts above-mentioned, though short in narration, occupied no little time in transaction. One, who from an experience larger even than that which fell to the lot of Columbus, knew what it was to endure the cold and indolent neglect of superficial men in small authority, and all the vast delay, which cannot be comprehended except by those who have suffered under it, that belongs to the transaction of any affair in which many persons have to co-operate, compares the suit of Columbus to a

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, *Historia General*, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 8. Madrid, 1601.

<sup>2</sup> "After a long time, the Catholic Kings ordered Don Christobal to be answered that being occupied in an important war, and particularly in the conquest of Granada, they could not undertake fresh expenses, but that when that was finished they would order a closer examination of his project, and decide about it."—HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 9.

battle—"a terrible, continuous, painful, prolix battle."<sup>1</sup> The tide of this long war (for war it was rather than a battle) having turned against him, Columbus left the court,<sup>2</sup> and went to Seville with "much sadness and discomfiture" (*con mucha tristeza y desconsuelo*). During this dreary period of a suitor's life, which, however, has been endured by some of the greatest men the world has seen, which was well known by close observation, or bitter experience, to Spenser, Camöens, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Bacon,—one joy at least was not untasted by Columbus, namely that of love. His beloved Beatrice, whom he first met at Cordova, must have believed in him, even if no one else had done so; but love was not sufficient to retain<sup>3</sup> at her side a man goaded by a great idea, or perhaps that love did but impel him to still nobler efforts for her sake, as is the way with lovers of the greater sort.

After giving up his hopes at court, Columbus is said to have applied to the Duke of Medina Sidonia; and afterwards to the Duke of Medina Celi. It is certain that when Columbus succeeded in his enterprize, the Duke of Medina Celi wrote to the Cardinal of Spain, showing that he (the Duke) had maintained Columbus two years in his

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, lxii, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> [Columbus passed the winter of 1486-87 at Salamanca; in the summer of 1487 he was attached to the court, receiving gratuities from Isabella, and was present at the siege and surrender of Malaga. In the autumn of that year, he either married or formed an irregular connection with Beatriz Enriquez de Arana (see Harris, *Christophe Colomb*, ii, pp. 353-357; Markham, *Life of Columbus*, p. 60). A year later, in the autumn of 1488, he was at Lisbon, and from there sent his brother Bartholomew first to England and then to France to see if there was any chance that either Henry VII. or Charles VIII. would take up his proposals. In May 1489, Columbus was back at Cordova, and it is said that it was during the following winter that the Duke of Medina-Celi proposed to fit out the expedition at his own expense (Fiske, *Discovery of America*, i, p. 408); in any case, he supported Columbus for two years. It was after these two years, in 1491, in the midst of the preparations for the siege of Granada, that Columbus left the court, but it will be seen that the sequence of events in the text is not in accordance with recent research.]

<sup>3</sup> "Neither the honours shown him by many of the nobility, nor the liberality of the Minister of Finance, Alonso de Quintanilla, who believed in him, nor the pledge of love in another son, born at Cordova, could make the delay tolerable."—MUÑOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, p. 60.

house,<sup>1</sup> and was ready to have undertaken the enterprize, but that he saw it was one for the Queen herself, and even then he wished to have had a part in it. I do not doubt that any man in whose house Columbus resided for two years, would have caught some portion of his enthusiasm, and have been ready to embark in his enterprize. It may be conjectured, however, that none of the nobles of the Spanish court would have been likely to undertake the matter without some sanction from the King or Queen.

Columbus now resolved to go into France,<sup>2</sup> and with this intent went to the monastery of La Rabida for his son Diego, intending to leave him at Cordova. At the monastery there was the faithful friend of Columbus, Juan Perez de Marchena, the Guardian,<sup>3</sup> to whom he doubtless confided all his griefs and struggles, and who could not bear to hear of his intention to leave the country, for France or England, and to make these nations greater by allowing them to aid him. Juan Perez took Garcia Hernandez into council upon the affairs of Columbus. This Hernandez is conjectured to have been a physician, somewhat skilled in physical science,<sup>4</sup> and therefore capable of appreciating the arguments of Columbus. It is worthy of notice that a person who appears only once, as it were, in a sentence in History, should have exercised so much influence upon it as Garcia Hernandez, who was probably a man of far superior attainments to those around

<sup>1</sup> "Alonso de Quintanilla wrote me on her behalf that the business was not settled, but that if it succeeded Her Highness would bear me in mind, and give me a share in it . . . now he is returned to Lisbon having found all that he sought for . . . which as soon as I knew I conveyed the good news to Her Highness . . . and begged that I might send each year some of my caravels. I beg that your lordship will aid me in this, since I kept him in my house for two years and encouraged him to the service which has turned out so great a thing."—Duke of Medina-Celi to Cardinal Mendoza.—FERNANDEZ DE NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 14.

<sup>2</sup> [In October 1491.]

<sup>3</sup> [Juan Perez the Guardian. It is matter for argument whether Fray Antonio de Marchena, to whom Columbus had been known since his arrival in Spain, belonged to the convent of La Rabida, whether Columbus had ever been to the convent before, or whether he had been previously known to Juan Perez.]

<sup>4</sup> Las Casas speaks of him as "médico ó físico."

him, and in the habit of deploring, as such men do, his hard lot in being placed where he could be so little understood. Now, however, he was to do more at one stroke than many a man who has been all his days before the world. These three—the monk, the learned physician, and the skilled cosmographer,—discussed together the propositions so unhappily familiar to the last-named member of their little council. The affection of Juan Perez and the learning of Hernandez were not slow to follow in the track which the enthusiasm of the great adventurer made out before them; and they were, no doubt, on that day, as convinced as Columbus himself, of the feasibility of his undertaking. The difficulty, however, was not in becoming believers themselves, but in persuading those to believe who would have power to further the enterprize. Their discussions upon this point ended in the conclusion that Juan Perez, who was known to the Queen, having on some occasions acted as her Confessor, should write to her Highness.<sup>1</sup> He did so; and the result was favourable. The Queen sent for him, heard what he had to say, and in consequence remitted money to Columbus to enable him to come to court and renew his suit. He attended the court again<sup>2</sup>: his negotiations were resumed; but were again broken off on the ground of the largeness of the conditions which he asked for.<sup>3</sup> His opponents said, that these conditions were too large if he succeeded, and if he should not succeed, and the conditions should come to nothing, they thought that there was an air of trifling in granting such conditions at all.<sup>4</sup> And, indeed, they were very large; namely, that he was to be made an admiral<sup>5</sup> at once, to

<sup>1</sup> [He had been her confessor in 1478.]

<sup>2</sup> [In December 1491, at the camp before Granada.]

<sup>3</sup> [Several of his former opponents had been converted to the discoverer's views, especially the influential Archbishop of Toledo. Isabella deferred the full consideration of the matter until after the surrender of Granada, which occurred 2nd January 1492. The conditions demanded by Columbus then came before the Royal Council, and were considered exorbitant.]

<sup>4</sup> "It appeared to them that he demanded too much if the enterprise succeeded, and that if it failed such conditions would seem ridiculous."—HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 8.

<sup>5</sup> [Admiral of all the new discoveries. He also asked a tenth of all

be appointed viceroy of the countries he should discover, and to have an eighth of the profits of the expedition. The only way, as it appears to me, of accounting for the extent of these demands and his perseverance in making them, even to the risk of total failure, is that the discovering of the Indies was but a step in his mind to greater undertakings, as they seemed to him, which he had in view, of going to Jerusalem with an army, and in fact of making another crusade. For Columbus carried the chivalrous ideas of the twelfth century into the somewhat self-seeking fifteenth.<sup>1</sup> The negotiation however failed a second time, and Columbus resolved again to go to France, when Alonso de Quintanilla and Juan Perez contrived to obtain a hearing for the great adventurer from the Cardinal Mendoza, who was pleased with him.<sup>2</sup> Columbus then offered, in order to meet the objections of his opponents, to pay an eighth part of the expense of the expedition. Still nothing was done. And now finally Columbus determined to go to France, and indeed had actually set off one day in January of the year 1492, when Luis de Santangel, Receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues of the crown of Aragon, a person much devoted to the plans of Columbus, addressed the Queen with all the energy that a man throws into his words, when he is aware that it is his last time for speaking in

spices, precious stones, and precious metals found, or bought and sold, within his jurisdiction, and an eighth of the profits of all succeeding expeditions on contributing an eighth of the expenses of preparation.]

[Mr Harris says of Columbus: "The fact is that the Admiral was simply a bold, practical man, perfectly alive to his personal interest, constantly at variance with everybody, yet honest, energetic, persevering, and good-hearted, neither better nor worse than the Genoese of his time, and who, in after life, lost his well-balanced mind with the thought, long and perseveringly entertained, that the world was soon coming to an end, and that he had been created by the Almighty for the sole and exclusive purpose of disclosing a great terrestrial secret before the impending cataclysm."—*Bib. Americana Vetustissima*. Additions, Paris 1872. And again, "Columbus was, and remained all his life, a man of his race, his profession, and his time. That is to say, a Genoese by birth, a sailor by occupation, and, living at the end of the fifteenth century, the principal motive of his actions was the desire to acquire wealth."—*Christophe Colomb*, ii, p. 43.]

<sup>2</sup> [Columbus appears to have been known to Cardinal Gonzalez de Mendoza, Archbishop of Toledo, before this.]

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favour of a thing which he has much at heart. He told her that he wondered, that having always had a lofty mind for great things, it should be wanting to her on this occasion.<sup>1</sup> He endeavoured to pique her jealousy as a monarch, by suggesting that the enterprize might fall into the hands of other princes. Then he said something in behalf of Columbus himself; and the Queen was not unlikely to know well the bearing of a great man. He intimated to her Highness, that what was an impossibility to the cosmographers, might not be so in nature. Nor, continued he, should any endeavour in so great a matter be attributed to lightness, even though the endeavour should fail, for it is the part of great and generous princes to ascertain the secrets of the world. Other princes (he did not mention those of neighbouring Portugal) had gained eternal fame this way. He concluded by saying that all the aid Columbus wanted to set the expedition afloat, was but a million of maravedis<sup>2</sup>; and that so great an enterprize ought not to be abandoned for the sake of such a trifling sum of money. These well-addressed arguments falling in, as they did, with those of Quintanilla the treasurer,<sup>3</sup> who had great influence with the Queen; prevailed. She thanked these lords for their counsel, and said she would adopt it, but they must wait until the finances had recovered a little from the drain upon them occasioned by the conquest of Granada, or, if they thought that the plan must be

<sup>1</sup> "She always having had a mind receptive of great ideas, he wondered that it should fail her now."—HERRERA, dec. i, lib. i, cap. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent to about £308. [To give the value in modern money of a million maravedis, would necessitate very complex and uncertain calculations, but there is no doubt that £308 is far too low an estimate (cf. HARRISSE, *Christophe Colomb*, i, p. 391; FISKE, *Discovery of America*, i, p. 418). At the end of the sixteenth century, a million of maravedis equalled some £750, or about £4000 in present values; probably no two inquirers would agree as to the proper equivalent in 1492.]

<sup>3</sup> Navarrete supposes that Luis de Santangel held a similar office under the crown of Aragon to that which Alonzo de Quintanilla held under the crown of Castille. It is a curious fact, that two finance ministers should have been the principal and the most effectual supporters at court of the project of Columbus. In our times, persons holding such offices are generally supposed to have a particular aversion to all inventors and projectors.



forthwith carried out, she would pledge her jewels to raise the necessary funds. Santangel and Quintanilla kissed her hands, highly delighted at succeeding; and Santangel offered to lend the money from his own estate. Upon this the Queen sent an alguazil to overtake Columbus and bring him back to the court. He was overtaken at the bridge of Pinos, two leagues from Granada; returned to Santa Fé<sup>1</sup>; was well received by Isabella; and finally the agreement between him and their Catholic Highnesses was settled with the secretary Coloma.<sup>2</sup>

Not much is seen of King Ferdinand in all these proceedings; and it is generally understood that he looked rather coldly upon the propositions of Columbus. We cannot say that he was at all unwise in so doing. His great compeer, Henry the Seventh, did not hasten to adopt the same project submitted to him by Bartholomew Columbus, sent into England for that purpose by his brother Christopher<sup>3</sup>; and I do not know that it has been thought to derogate from the English king's sagacity. Those who govern are in all ages surrounded by projectors, and have to clear the way about them as well as they can, and to take care that they get time and room for

<sup>1</sup> The camp before Granada, which afterwards became a town.

<sup>2</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 9.

<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to say how the project brought before Henry the Seventh's notice by Bartholomew Columbus was received. Some say it was made a mockery of at the English Court: others speak of it as actually accepted. The truth, perhaps, lies equally between these two statements. Not that truth, as some think, is apt to be found in choosing the mean between two opposite statements; but, in this particular case, the known facts seem to warrant such a conclusion. It is probable that Henry listened with interest to Bartholomew Columbus, who was a man of much intelligence and great maritime knowledge. Moreover, the King probably expressed a wish to see Christopher Columbus, and a readiness to entertain the proposition he had to make, if it were feasible. But it seems unlikely that the negotiation went much further, considering the rigid manner in which Columbus insisted upon his exact conditions being accepted by the Spanish Court. No such bargain at a distance with a reserved and parsimonious monarch, was likely, therefore, to have been concluded.

For authorities on this subject, see Las Casas, *Hist.*, lxii, p. 224; Barcia, *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 10; Bacon's *Henry VII.*; Herrera, dec. 1, lib. 2; Oviedo, lib. 1, cap. 4; Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. 15.

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managing their own immediate affairs. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if good plans should sometimes share the fate which ought to attend, and must attend, the great mass of all projects submitted to men in power. Here, however, the ultimate event would justify the monarch's caution; for it would be hard to prove that Spain has derived aught but a golden weakness from her splendid discoveries and possessions in the New World.

Moreover, the characters of the two men being essentially opposed, it is probable that Ferdinand felt something like contempt for the uncontrolled enthusiasm of Columbus; and, upon the whole, it is rather to be wondered that the King consented to give the powers he did, than that he did not do more. Had it been a matter which concerned his own kingdom of Aragon, he might not have gone so far, but the expenses were to be charged on Castille, and perhaps he looked upon the whole affair as another instance of Isabella's good-natured sympathy with enthusiasts.

The agreement between Columbus and their Catholic Highnesses was signed at Santa Fé on the 17th of April 1492: and Columbus went to Palos to make preparation for his voyage, bearing with him an order that the two vessels which that city furnished annually to the crown for three months, should be placed at his disposal.<sup>1</sup>

There was no delay in furnishing the funds for this expedition. From an entry in an account-book belonging to the bishopric of Palencia,<sup>2</sup> it appears that one million one hundred and forty thousand maravedis were advanced by Santangel in May 1492 "being the sum he lent for paying the caravels which their Highnesses ordered to go as the armada to the Indies, and for paying Christopher Columbus, who goes in the said armada."

Juan Perez, we are told, was active in persuading men to embark. The Pinzons, rich men and skilful mariners of Palos, joined in the undertaking, subscribing an eighth

<sup>1</sup> [It is said that Palos was condemned to find the ships as a punishment for some municipal offence.]

<sup>2</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 2.

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of the expenses ; and thus by these united exertions three vessels were manned with ninety mariners, and provisioned for a year.<sup>1</sup> At length all the preparations were complete, and on a Friday (not inauspicious in this case), the 3rd of August 1492, after they had all confessed and received the Sacrament, they set sail for the bar of Saltes, making for the Canary Islands.

Columbus was now fairly afloat: about to change the long-continued, weary, dismal life of a suitor for the sharp, intense anxiety of a struggle in which there was no alternative to success, but deplorable, ridiculous, fatal failure. Speaking afterwards of the time he spent as a suitor at court, he says, "Eight years I was torn with disputes, and, in a word, my proposition was a thing for mockery."<sup>2</sup> It was now to be seen what mockery was in it. The account which I shall give of the voyage is mainly taken from an abridgment of Columbus's own diary, made by Las Casas, who in some places gives the Admiral's own words.

The little squadron reached the Canary Islands in a few days, with no event worth recording, except that the caravel *Pinta*, commanded by Martin Alonso Pinzon, unshipped her rudder. This was supposed to be no accident, but to have been contrived by the owners of the vessel, who did not like the voyage. The Admiral (from henceforth Columbus is called the Admiral) was obliged to stay some time at the Canary Islands to refit the *Pinta*, and to make some change in the cut of her sails. In the abridgment of the diary, under the date of the 9th of August, the Admiral remarks that many Spaniards of these islands, respectable men (*hombres*

<sup>1</sup> [The *Santa Maria*, the Capitana or flagship, commanded by Juan de la Cosa, who afterwards drew the earliest map of the Spanish transatlantic possessions that has come down to us ; the *Pinta*, commanded by Martin Pinzon ; and the *Niña*, by Vicente Yanez Pinzon. The seamen of Palos were so little eager to immortalise themselves, that on 30th April 1492 the monarchs proclaimed a suspension of legal proceedings in favour of all who volunteered for the voyage. By this decree their persons and property were protected during the voyage, and for two months after their return. With the added possibility of reaching the Indies such a respite must have been attractive to debtors, and probably it did more to obtain crews than the efforts of Juan Perez and the Pinzons.]

<sup>2</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 137.

*honrados*), swear that each year they see land; and he remembers how in the year 1484, some one came from the island of Madeira to the King of Portugal to beg a caravel in order to go and discover that land which he declared he could see, each year, and in the same manner.<sup>1</sup> Had not the Admiral been conscious of the substantial originality of his proceedings, he would hardly have been careful to collect these scattered notices which might afterwards be used, as many like them were used, to depreciate that originality. There is no further entry in the diary until the 6th of September, when they set out from Gomera (one of the Canary Islands) on their unknown way. For many days what we have of the diary is little more than a log-book giving the rate of sailing, or rather, two rates, one for Columbus's own private heed, and the other for the sailors. For instance, when they go sixty leagues in a day and night, it is put down at forty-eight for the sailors. On the 13th of September, it is noted that the needle declined in the evening to the North-west, and on the ensuing morning to the North-east<sup>2</sup>—the first time that such a variation had been observed, or at least, recorded by Europeans. On the 14th, the sailors of the caravel *Niña* saw two tropical birds, which they said were never wont to be seen at more than fifteen or twenty leagues from shore. On the 15th, they all saw a meteor fall from heaven, which made them very sad. On the 16th, they first came upon those immense plains of sea-weed (the *fucus natans*) which constitute the Mar de Sargasso, and which occupy a space in the Atlantic almost equal to seven times the extent of France.<sup>3</sup> The aspect of these plains greatly terrified the sailors, who thought they might be coming upon submerged lands and rocks; but finding that the vessels cut their way well through this sea-weed, the sailors thereupon took heart. On the 17th, they see more of these plains of sea-weed, and thinking

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> [The variation was westerly—from east to west after crossing the line of no variation. "On this day, at the commencement of the night, the needles turned a half point to the north-west, and in the morning they turned somewhat more north-west."—*Journal of Columbus*, Hakluyt Soc.]

<sup>3</sup> HUMBOLDT's *Kosmos*, ii, p. 287.

themselves to be near land, they are almost in good spirits, when finding that the needle declines to the West a whole point of the compass and more, their hopes suddenly sink again: they begin to "murmur between their teeth," and to wonder whether they are not in another world. Columbus, however, orders an observation to be taken at day-break, when the needle is found to point to the North again; moreover he is ready with a theory sufficiently ingenious for that time, to account for the phenomenon of variation which had so disturbed the sailors; namely, that it was caused by the north star moving round the pole.<sup>1</sup> The sailors are, therefore, quieted upon this head. In the morning of the same day they catch a crab, from which Columbus infers that they cannot be more than eighty leagues distant from land. The 18th, they see many birds, and a cloud in the distance; and that night they expect to see land. On the 19th, in the morning, comes a pelican (a bird not usually seen twenty leagues from the coast); in the evening, another: also drizzling rain without wind, a certain sign, as the diary says, of proximity to land.

The Admiral, however, will not beat about for land, as he concludes that the land which these various natural phenomena gave token of, can only be islands, as indeed it proved to be. He will see them on his return; but now he must press on to the Indies.<sup>2</sup> This determination shows his strength of mind, and indicates the almost scientific basis on which his great resolve reposed.

Accordingly he was not to be diverted from the main design by any partial success, though by this time he knew well the fears of his men, some of whom had already come to the conclusion, "that it would be their best plan

<sup>1</sup> He thus accounted for a purely telluric phenomenon by an astronomical fact of which the pilots were ignorant. As M. Humboldt well expresses it—"The pilots were re-assured, ignorant as they were both of the variation of the compass and the non-fixity of the polar star."—*Examen Critique*, iii, p. 57, note.

<sup>2</sup> "He considered it quite certain that there were islands to the north and south of him, as indeed there were, he going between them; but his determination was to go straight forwards to the Indies, the weather serving, because (God willing) he could see everything when he returned. These were his words."—NAVARRETE, *Col. de Viages*, i, p. 11 (Journal of Columbus).

to throw him quietly into the sea, and say he unfortunately fell in, while he stood absorbed in looking at the stars.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, three days after he had resolved to pass on to the Indies, we find him saying, for Las Casas gives his words, “Very needful for me was this contrary wind, for the people were very much tormented with the idea that there were no winds on these seas that could take them back to Spain.”

On they go, having signs occasionally in the presence of birds and grass and fish that land must be near; but land does not come. Once, too, they are all convinced that they see land: they sing the “Gloria in excelsis”; and even the Admiral goes out of his course towards this land, which turns out to be no land. They are like men listening to a dreadful discourse, or oration, that seems to have many endings which end not: so that the hearer listens at last in grim despair, thinking that all things have lost their meaning, and that ending is but another form of beginning.

These mariners were stout-hearted, too; but what a daring<sup>2</sup> thing it was to plunge, down-hill as it were, into a new world of waters, mocked day by day with signs of land that neared not. And these men had left at home all that is dearest to man, and did not bring out any great idea to uphold them, and had already done enough to make them important men in their towns, and to furnish ample talk for the evenings of their lives. Still we find Columbus, as late as the 3rd of October, saying, “that he did not choose to stop beating about last week during those days that they had such signs of land, although he had knowledge of there being certain islands in that neighbourhood, because he would not suffer any detention,

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 10.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek dramatist rightly puts it as a proof that man is the most dread of known creatures, since driven by the wintry wind he goes beyond the gray sea, traversing the waves howling around him:—

Πολλὰ τὰ θανά, κούδεν ἄν-  
θρώπου δεινότερον πύλει.  
τοῦτο καὶ πολλοὶ πέραν  
πόντου χαίμεν νύτῃ  
χωρεῖ, περιρρυχίοισι  
πρὸν ἐς εὐμασί.

Antig. 332-337.

since his object was to go to the Indies; and if he should stop on the way, it would show a want of mind." <sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile he had a hard task to keep his men in any order. Peter Martyr,<sup>2</sup> who knew Columbus well,

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col. de Viages*, i, p. 16. [By the 7th October he had run 2724 geographical miles on a westerly course from the Canaries, and, according to the maps of Toscanelli and Behaim, he had over-run the distance to Cipango. On the 7th the course was changed to west-south-west, being induced thereto by observing the direction in which birds were flying. "The Admiral was aware that most of the islands held by the Portuguese were discovered by the flight of birds."]

<sup>2</sup> This Peter Martyr must not be confounded with the Peter Martyr who took a prominent part in the Reformation. Our historian is Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, a Milanese, born in 1455, at Arona, on the Lago Maggiore.

Having finished his education, he went to Rome, where he entered into the service of Cardinal Visconti, and where he remained ten years. From Rome, accompanying a Spanish ambassador, Peter Martyr went to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, by whom he was well received. This was in the year 1487.

His career was thenceforward mixed up with the greatest affairs of Spain; which he had good opportunities of observing, as he was one of those persons, common in that age, unhappily uncommon in ours, who in their time play many parts. He was a soldier, a schoolmaster, an ambassador, a statesman, a priest, an historian, and a gossiping man of letters, who reminds the English reader occasionally of Horace Walpole and of Mr Pepys. He delighted in the society of the great; and he was upon the frankest and most intimate terms with them. "Felicia hæc (blandimenta naturæ) delicii prædicant, magnorum me virorum sola commercia beant."—*Epist.* 95.

Peter Martyr served two campaigns in Ferdinand and Isabella's armies. To use an expression of his own, he fed with his learning the studious youth of Spain. ("Suxerunt mea literalia ubera Castellæ principes fere omnes.") He was entrusted with an embassy to the Sultan of Egypt, of which he has given an account (*De Legat. Babylonich, libri tres*): and, during the troubles which ensued in Spain, after Charles the Fifth came to the throne, he was in correspondence with the Regent Adrian, afterwards Pope, and was a privy-councillor. This appears from a letter in which Peter Martyr regrets not having been sent for by the Regent to a council. "Æquo tuli animo solitudinem hanc" (the beautiful Granada). "Nunc autem, quandoquidem tua Reverendiss. Dom. (*Dominatio*. See Ducange), jussit illum accersiri, quid me jam diutius hic patitur morari?"—*Epist.* 728.

The principal works which Peter Martyr has left in reference to American affairs are, *De Rebus Oceanicis et Orbe Novo Decades*, and *De Insulis nuper Inventis et Incolarum Moribus*. His letters (*Opus Epistolarum Petri Martyris Anglerii*) are of the utmost service to those who wish to study the nature of the home government of Spain at that period.

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and had probably been favoured with a special account from him of these perilous days, describes his way of dealing with the refractory mariners, and how he contrived to win them onwards from day to day; now soothing them with soft words, now carrying their minds from

A very learned and penetrating historian has thrown the gravest doubts upon Peter Martyr's writings. "Whoever," he says, "will take the trouble of comparing the two first letters in the decades of Peter Martyr with any authentic history, will perceive that they are a negligent and palpable imposture, every date being falsified, even that of the year in which Columbus made his great discovery. It is a strange instance of oversight in Robertson that he has uniformly quoted them as written at the time, for the least attention must have shown him the contrary."—HALLAM'S *Int. to the Lit. of Europe*, i, cap. 4.

Mr Hallam's suspicions, very reasonably entertained, have, in my judgment, been entirely confuted by Mr Prescott (see *Hist. of Ferdinand and Isabella*, fourth edition, ii, p. 68), and, by anticipation, in the prologue of the Spanish historian Muñoz (*Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, Madrid, 1793). I am enabled to strengthen the arguments of these last-named historians by referring to the important evidence of a contemporary. "Concerning these early events no one is more deserving of trust than Peter Martyr (*cerca destas primeras cosas á ninguno se debe dar mas fee que á Pedro Martir*, italicised in the original), who wrote his decades in Latin, being then in Castille; because what he said in them touching the beginnings was carefully obtained from the Admiral, the great discoverer, with whom he often talked, and from those who were with him, and from the others who made these first voyages."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxii, p. 33. [But Las Casas adds: "The other decades, which relate to the later history of the Indies, contain some fables." The MS. copy used by Sir Arthur Helps may not have contained this passage.]

One thing seems to have escaped the attention of Peter Martyr's biographers, or only to have been slightly alluded to by them, namely, that he was a member of the first council of the Indies, appointed in 1518. "Peter Martyr worked to be made a member of the Council of the Indies, and obtained his wish." (LAS CASAS, *Hist.*) He was also Abbot of Jamaica. He died in 1526.

It is a great felicity for the historian to have so trustworthy and so intelligent a man as Peter Martyr as a daily witness of the great affairs which were transacted at the court of Spain at that period. Far from his writings having anything factitious about them, their merit is, that they reflect his uncorrected thoughts and feelings on the very day in which he recorded any transaction. He was a man of strong impulses, and his bitterness against the Flemings who came over in the suite of Charles the Fifth is expressed with the utmost latitude of imprudence. They had deprived him of his salary.

He professed, and I believe felt, an indifference to fame, saying that it was better to be unknown than to be carped at in the public ways of men. "Satiis namque est latere, quam in comitis populari



thought of the present danger by spreading out large hopes before them, not forgetting to let them know what their Princes would say to them, if they attempted aught against him, or would not obey his orders.<sup>1</sup> With this untutored crowd of wild, frightened men around him, with mocking hopes, not knowing what each day would bring to him, on went Columbus. At last came the 11th of October, and with it indubitable signs of land. The diary mentions their finding on that day a table-board and a carved stick, the carving apparently wrought by some iron instrument. Moreover, the men in one of the vessels saw a branch of a haw tree with fruit on it. Now, indeed, they must be close to land. The sun went down upon the same weary round of waters which for so long a time their eyes had ached to see beyond, when, at ten o'clock, Columbus, standing on the poop of his vessel, saw a light, and called to him, privately, Pedro Gutierrez, a groom of the King's chamber, who saw it also. Then they called Rodigo Sanchez, who had been sent by their Highnesses as overlooker. I imagine him to have been a cold and cautious man, of the kind that are sent by jealous states to accompany and curb great generals, and who are not usually much loved by them. Sanchez did not see the light at first, because, as Columbus says, he did not stand in the place whence it could be seen, but at last even he sees it; and it may now be considered to have been seen officially. "It appeared like a candle that went up and down, and Don Christopher did not doubt that it was true light, and that it was on land:

dente corrodí." His letters were written very carelessly and in haste. A learned contemporary, Juan de Vergara, mentions having seen Peter Martyr writing a couple of letters, while his servants were laying the table for dinner.—See NICHOLAS ANTONIO, *Bibl. Hispan. Nova*, ii, p. 372.

His personal knowledge of Columbus and of others amongst the first voyagers to the Indies, must ever make Peter Martyr one of the great authorities for any history of the New World.

<sup>1</sup> "After thirty days had passed they broke out furiously against him, crying that he should go no further. But he ever, with gentle words and generous promises, persuaded them onwards day by day, soothing and commanding; reminding them also that to plot against him or to disobey him would be accounted treason to the Catholic Kings."—PETER MARTYR, dec. i, lib. i.

and so it proved, as it came from people passing with lights from one cottage to another."<sup>1</sup>

Their Highnesses had promised a pension of ten thousand maravedis to the fortunate man who should see land first. The *Pinta* was the foremost vessel; and it was from her deck, at two o'clock in the morning, that land was first seen by Rodrigo de Triana. We cannot but be sorry for this poor common sailor, who got no reward, and of whom they tell a story, that in sadness and despire, he passed into Africa, after his return to Spain, and became a Mahometan.<sup>2</sup> The pension was adjudged to the Admiral: it was charged, somewhat ominously, on the shambles (*carnicerías*) of Seville, and was paid him to the day of his death; for, says the historian Herrera, "he saw light in the midst of darkness, signifying the spiritual light which was introduced amongst these barbarous people, God permitting that, the war being finished with the Moors, seven hundred and twenty years after they had set foot in Spain, this work (the conversion of the Indians) should commence, so that the Princes of Castille and Leon might always be occupied in bringing infidels to the knowledge of the Holy Catholic Faith."

These last words are notable. They are such as Columbus himself would probably have made use of in describing this, the crowning event of his life. In the preface to his diary, which is an address to Ferdinand and Isabella, he speaks at large of the motives of their Highnesses. He begins by saying, how, in this present year of 1492, their Highnesses had concluded their war with the Moors, having taken the great city of Granada, at the siege of which he was present, and saw the royal banners placed upon the towers of the Alhambra. He then tells how he had given information to their Highnesses of the lands of India, and of a Prince, called the Grand Khan, who had sent ambassadors to Rome, praying for doctors to instruct him in the Faith; and how the Holy Father had never provided him with these doctors; and that great towns (*tantos pueblos*) were perishing, from

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. I, lib. I, cap. 12.

<sup>2</sup> [According to Oviedo.]

the belief of their inhabitants in idolatry, and from receiving amongst them "sects of perdition." After the above statement, he adds, "Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians and princes, lovers and furtherers of the Christian faith, and enemies of the sect of Mahomet, and of all idolatries and heresies, thought to send me, Christopher Columbus, to the aforesaid provinces of India to see the aforesaid princes, the cities and lands, and the disposition of them and of everything about them, and the way that should be taken to convert them to our holy faith."<sup>1</sup>

Columbus then speaks of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain as occurring at the same time as that in which he received orders to pursue a westerly course to India, thus combining the two transactions together, no doubt as proofs of the devout intentions of their Highnesses: and, indeed, throughout the document, he ascribes no motives to the Monarchs but such as were religious.

The diary to which this address was prefixed is probably one of the books which their Highnesses allude to in a letter to Columbus, as being in their possession, and which they assured him they had not shown to anybody. I see no reason to doubt the perfect good faith of Columbus in making such a statement as that just referred to; and it is well to remark upon it, because we shall never come to a right understanding of those times and of the question of slavery as connected with them, unless we fully appreciate the good as well as the bad motives which guided the most important persons of that era.

As for Queen Isabella, there can be no doubt about her motives. Even in the lamentably unjust things in which she was too often concerned, she had what to her mind was compelling reason to act as she did. Perhaps there is hardly any great personage whose name and authority are found in connexion with so much that is strikingly evil, all of it done, or rather assented to, upon the highest and purest motives. Whether we refer to the expulsion of the Jews, the treatment of the Moorish converts, or the establishment of the Inquisition, all her proceedings in these matters were entirely sincere and noble-minded. Methinks I can still see her beautiful, majestic face (with

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 2.

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broad brow, and clear, honest, loving eye), as it looks down upon the beholder from one of the chapels in the cathedral at Granada: a countenance too expressive and individual to be what painters give as that of an angel, and yet the next thing to it. Now, I could almost fancy, she looks down reproachfully, and yet with conscious sadness. What she would say in her defence, could we interrogate her, is, that she obeyed the voice of Heaven—taking the wise and good men of her day as its interpreters. Oh! that she had but persisted in listening to it, as it spoke in her own kindly heart, when with womanly pity she was wont to intercede in favour of the poor cooped-up inmates of some closely-beleaguered town or fortress! But at least the poor Indian can utter nothing but blessings on her. He might have needed no other “protector,” had she lived; nor would slavery have found in his fate one of the darkest and most fatal chapters in its history.

✓ But now, from Granada, and our fancies there, the narrative brings us back to the first land touched by Columbus. The landing of Columbus in the New World must ever be a conspicuous fact in the annals of mankind; and it was adorned by a ceremonial worthy of the occasion. On the ensuing morning after the light had been observed from the ships, being a Friday, the 12th of October 1492, Columbus, clad in complete armour, and carrying in his hand the royal banner of Spain, descended upon the level shores of the small island which had first greeted him, and which he found to be very fruitful—fresh and verdant, and “like a garden full of trees.”<sup>1</sup> The other captains accompanied him, each of them bearing a banner with a green cross depicted upon it, and with the initials of Ferdinand and Isabella surmounted by their respective crowns<sup>2</sup>—a device

<sup>1</sup> “This island is rather large and very flat, with bright green trees, much water, and a very large lake in the centre, without any mountain, and the whole land so green that it is a pleasure to look upon it.”—*Journal*, Hak. Soc.

<sup>2</sup> “The Admiral took the royal standard, and the captains went with two banners of the green cross which the Admiral took in all the ships as a sign, with an F and a Y and a crown over each letter, one on one side of the cross and the other on the other.”—*Journal*, Hak. Soc.

that well expressed the loyalty and devotion of Columbus, and had been chosen by him. These chief officers were followed by a large retinue from their crews. In numerous lines along the shore stood the simple islanders looking on with innocent amazement.

On touching land, Columbus and all the Spaniards who were present, fell upon their knees, and with tears—tears of that deepest kind, which men do not know the cause of—poured forth their “immense thanksgivings to Almighty God.”<sup>1</sup>

The man who of all that embassy, if we may call it so, from the Old to the New World, was certainly the least surprised by all he saw, was at the same time the most affected. For thus it is, that the boldness of a great design is never fully appreciated by the designer himself, until he has apparently accomplished his work, when he is apt, if it be indeed a great work, to look back with shuddering awe at his own audacity in having proposed it to mankind. The vast resolve which sustains such a man through his long and difficult enterprise, having for the moment nothing to struggle against, dies away, leaving a strange sinking at the heart; and thus the greatest successes are often accompanied by a peculiar and bewildering melancholy. New difficulties, however, bred from success (for nothing is complete in life), soon arise to summon forth again the discoverer's energies, and to nerve him for fresh disappointments and renewed endeavours. Columbus will not fail to have his full share of such difficulties.

The followers of the great man, whose occasional faint-heartedness must often have driven all sleep from his weary eyelids throughout the watches of the night, now began to think with remorse how much suffering they had needlessly inflicted upon their greatly-enduring leader.

<sup>1</sup> Oviedo, whose account of the landing is not to be compared with that of Las Casas, from which the above is taken, describes the Admiral as reciting the “*Te Deum laudamus*”—“As soon as the Admiral came to the shore he fell on his knees, and weeping abundantly tears of joy, commenced to say, like St Ambrose and St Augustine, *Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur*, etc.; and so he and those with him giving thanks to our Lord, the joy and thankfulness of both was inexpressible.”—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat. de Indias*, lib. 2, cap. 5. Madrid, 1851.

They sought his pardon with tears, and, subdued at that moment by his greatness when illustrated by the expressed in loving terms their admiration, their gratitude and their assurances of fidelity. The placable Columbus received their gracious sayings with all the warmth and tenderness that belonged to his large and amiable character.

The great business of the day then commenced; and Columbus, with the due legal formalities, took possession, on behalf of the Spanish Monarchs, of the island Guanahani, which he forthwith named San Salvador.<sup>1</sup> The gravity of the proceeding must have astonished the beholding islanders. Their attention, however, was soon turned to the Spaniards themselves; and they approached the strangers, wondering at their whiteness and at their beards. Columbus, as being the noblest-looking personage there present—and also, from wearing crimson over his armour (*por ir vestido de grana*),—attracted special attention, and justly seemed, as he was, the principal figure in this great spectacle.

Columbus is for the present moment radiant with success. Our interest passes now from him to the new people he was amongst. And what were they like? Were they worthy of the efforts which the Old World had made to find them? Was there mind and soul enough in them for them to become good Christians? What says the greatest of men who first saw them? What impression did they make on him? Let him answer for himself.

“Because they had much friendship for us, and because I knew they were people that would deliver themselves better to the Christian faith, and be converted more through love than by force; I gave to some of them some coloured caps and some strings of glass beads for their necks, and many other things of little value, with which

<sup>1</sup> [Guanahani has been identified with Watling Island by Muñoz, Admiral Becker, Mr Major, and Lt. Murdoch, U.S.N.; with Cat Island by Washington Irving and Humboldt; with Samana by Captain Fox, U.S.N.; and with Turk's Island by Navarrete and Kettell. According to Sir Clements Markham, the island which was the landfall must satisfy twenty-four requirements drawn from the journal of Columbus, and Watling Island answers to every one of them.]

they were delighted, and were so entirely ours that it was a marvel to see. The same afterwards came swimming to the ships' boats where we were, and brought us parrots, cotton threads in balls, darts and many other things, and bartered them with us for things which we gave them, such as bells and small glass beads. In fine, they took and gave all of whatever they had with good will. But it appeared to me they were a people very poor in everything. They went totally naked, as naked as their mothers brought them into the world."<sup>1</sup>

Then Columbus goes on to say, that these Indians were well made, with very good faces, but hair like horsehair, their colour yellow; and that they painted themselves. They neither carried arms nor understood such things; for when he showed them swords, they took hold of them by the blade and hurt themselves. Their darts were without iron, but some had a fish's tooth at the end. In concluding his description he says, "They ought to make faithful servants and of good understanding, for I see that very quickly they repeat all that is said to them; and I believe they would easily be converted to Christianity, for it appeared to me that they had no creed."

A little further on, the Admiral says of the people of a neighbouring island, that they were more domestic and tractable than those of San Salvador, and more intelligent too, as he saw in their way of reckoning for the payment of the cotton they brought to the ships. At the mouth of the Rio de Mares<sup>2</sup> some of the Admiral's men, whom he had sent to reconnoitre, brought him word that the houses of the natives were the best they had seen. They were made, he says, like "alfaneques (pavilions), very large, and appeared as royal tents without an arrangement of streets, except one here and there, and within they were very clean, and well swept, and their furniture very well arranged. All these houses were made of palm branches, and were very beautiful. Our men found in these houses many statues of women, and several heads fashioned like masks and very well wrought. I do not

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 21 (Journal).

<sup>2</sup> In Cuba, now Nuevitas del Principe.

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know, he adds, whether they have these for the love of the beautiful or for purposes of worship."<sup>1</sup> The Spaniards found also excellent nets, fish-hooks and fishing-tackle. There were tame birds about the houses, and dogs which did not bark.

The Admiral, speaking of the Indians of the coast near the Rio del Sol,<sup>2</sup> says that they are "very gentle, without knowing what evil is, neither killing nor stealing."<sup>3</sup> He describes the frank generosity of the people of Marien,<sup>4</sup> and of the honour they thought it, to be asked to give, in terms which may remind his readers of the doctrines maintained by Christians in respect of giving.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to observe the way in which, at this point of the narrative, a new product is introduced to the notice of the Old World—a product that was hereafter to become, not only an unfailing source of pleasure to a large section of the male part of mankind, from the highest to the lowest, but was also to distinguish itself as one of those commodities for revenue, which are the delight of statesmen, the great financial resource of modern nations, and which afford a means of indirect taxation that has perhaps nourished many a war, and prevented many a revolution. Two discoverers<sup>6</sup> whom the Admiral had sent out from the Puerto de Mares (one of them being a learned Jew, who could speak Hebrew, Chaldee, and some Arabic, and would have been able to discourse, as Columbus probably thought, with any of the subjects of the Grand Khan, if he had met them) found that the men of the country they came to investigate, indulged in a "fumigation" of a peculiar kind. The smoke in question was absorbed into the mouth through a charred stick, and was caused by burning certain herbs wrapped in a dry leaf, which outer covering was called "tabaco." Las Casas, who carefully describes this process of imbibing

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> A river at the north-eastern part of Cuba.

<sup>3</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> A province of Hispaniola.

<sup>5</sup> "They are so generous a people that they give with the best will in the world, so much so that they think that in being asked to give, a great favour is being done to them."—NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, i, p. 105.

<sup>6</sup> [Rodrigo de Jerez and Luis de Torres.]



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smoke, mentions that the Indians when questioned about it, said that it took away fatigue, and that he has known Spaniards in the island of Hispaniola who adopted the same habit, and who, being reprov'd for it as a vice, replied that it was not in their power to leave it off. "I do not know," he adds, "what savour or profit they found in them" (*tabacos*).<sup>1</sup> I cannot help thinking that there were several periods in his own life when these strange fumigations would have afforded him singular soothing and comfort. However that may be, there can be no doubt of the importance, financially and commercially speaking, of this discovery of tobacco—a discovery which in the end proved more productive to the Spanish Crown than that of the gold-mines of the Indies.

The excellent relations that existed between the expedition of Columbus and the inhabitants of Cuba may be seen from the fact that these two Christians, who were the first witnesses of tobacco-smoking, and who travelled with only two Indian attendants, were everywhere well and reverently received.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The two Christians met on the road many people, men and women, passing to their villages, the men always with a half-burnt brand in their hands and certain herbs for smoking. These herbs are dry and are placed in a dry leaf made in the shape of the paper tubes which the boys make at Easter. Lighted at one end, at the other the smoke is sucked or drawn in with the breath; the effect of it is to make them feel sleepy and as it were intoxicated, and they say that using it relieves the feeling of fatigue. These rolls they call *tabacos*. I knew Spaniards in Española who were accustomed to use it, and being reprehended for it and told that it was a vice, said that they could not leave it off. I do not know what pleasure or benefit they found in it." —LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxii, p. 332. See also NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, i, p. 51, note.

<sup>2</sup> "All the people who met these two Christians in seeing them showed great admiration and treated them with the same respect." —Las Casas, lxii, p. 333.

[Sir Arthur Helps has omitted an illustration of the way Columbus showed his appreciation of the friendly confidence with which he was received. In his journal it is recorded: "Yesterday (11th November at Rio de Mares) a canoe came alongside the ship with six youths in it. Five came on board and I ordered them to be detained. . . . I afterwards sent to a house on the western side of the river and seized seven women, old and young, and three children. I did this because the men would behave better in Spain if they had women of their own land than without them. . . . The same night the husband of one of

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Resuming the thread of the history, it remains to be seen what more Columbus did and suffered in this voyage. The first Indians he met with had some few gold ornaments about them—poor wretches, if they had possessed the slightest gift of prophecy, they would have thrown these baubles into the deepest sea!—and they were asked whence came this gold. From a race, they said, living southwards, where there was a great king, who had much gold. On another occasion, other Indians being asked the same question, answered, “Cubanacan, Cubanacan.” They meant the middle of Cuba; but their words at once suggested to Columbus the idea that he was now upon the traces of his long looked-for friend, Kublai Kaan, the Khan of Khans. Indeed, it is almost ludicrous to see throughout, how Columbus is possessed with the notions borrowed from his reading of Marco Polo and other travellers. He asks for “his Cipango,” as Herrera slyly puts it; and the natives at once point out to him the direction where that is. They thought he meant Cibao, where afterwards the best mines of gold were found. The Admiral, bent on discovery, and especially on finding the terra firma, which adjoined “his” India, did not stay long anywhere. Proceeding southwards from San Salvador, he discovered an island, or rather a group of islands, to which he gave the general name of Santa Maria de la Concepcion<sup>1</sup>; he then discovered Cuba, and coasted along the north-eastern part of that island; and afterwards in due course came to Hispaniola,<sup>2</sup> called by the natives Hayti,<sup>3</sup> in which island he landed upon

the women, and who was father of the three children, came alongside in a canoe. He asked me to let him come with them, and besought me much.” Las Casas says that for this act alone Columbus deserved all the misfortunes which subsequently overwhelmed him. Few of his biographers deem it worth mention.]

<sup>1</sup> [On the 16th October. On the 17th he anchored off Fernandina, the modern Long Island; on the 19th Isabella, the modern Crooked Island; on the 25th Islas de Arenas, now Ragged Islands; and on the 28th he reached Puerto Naranjo in Cuba. (Markham, *Columbus*.)]

<sup>2</sup> [Puerto Maria, now St Nicolas Mole, made 6th December.]

<sup>3</sup> [The form, Hispaniola, used by Sir Arthur Helps, is an indefensible corruption but one commonly adopted in English. Columbus named it Insula Hispanie or, in Spanish, Isla Española, which soon became Española, whence the English form.]

the territory of King Guacanagari, where he was received most cordially.

Various conjectures have been made as to the different results which would have followed, both for the New and for the Old World, if Columbus had steered a little to the northward, or the southward, of the course which he actually took. One thing, however, is obvious, that in arriving at Hispaniola he came to a central point, not only of the West Indies, but of the whole of the New World, and a point, therefore, most felicitously situated for the spreading of future discovery and conquest.

It may be mentioned here, that Martin Alonso Pinzon had wilfully parted company from the Admiral while on the coast of Cuba: covetousness being probably the cause of this most undutiful proceeding.<sup>1</sup> But, indeed, there is another instance of the insubordination of the mariners, which makes the wonder only still greater, how Columbus could have brought them across the Atlantic at all. One evening<sup>2</sup> the Admiral, after paying a visit to Guacanagari, seeing the sea quite calm, betook himself to rest. As he had not slept for two days and a night, it is probable his slumber was deep. Meanwhile, the steersman, contrary to the distinct orders of the Admiral, gave the helm to a common sailor, a youth. All of the sailors went to sleep. The sea was as calm "as water in a dish." Little by little the ship drifted on to a shoal. Directly they touch, the sailor-boy at the helm starts from his dream, haply about his mother, and cries out. The Admiral jumps up first (for the responsibility of command seldom goes quite to sleep); then the officer whose watch it ought to have been, hurries up, and the Admiral orders him to lower the boat which they carried on the poop, and to throw out an anchor astern. Instead of obeying the Admiral, this cowardly villain, with others like him, sprang into the boat, and made off for the other vessel, which was

<sup>1</sup> [On 21st November "out of avarice thinking that an Indian who had been put on board his caravel could show him where there was much gold." He rejoined on the 6th January 1493.]

<sup>2</sup> [On the night of 24-25th December.]

about half a league off.<sup>1</sup> The other vessel would not receive them, and they rowed back again. But it was too late. The Admiral did what he could in the emergency: he cut down the masts, lightened the vessel as best he might, took out his people and went with them to the other caravel, sending his boat to Guacanagari to inform him of the misfortune. The good Guacanagari was moved to tears by this sad affair. He gave not only sympathy, however, but assistance. His people went out with their canoes, and in a few moments cleared the vessel of all the goods in it. Guacanagari was very careful that nothing should be lost. He himself stood guard over the things which had been taken out of the ship. Then he sent comforting messages to the Admiral saying that he would give him what he had, to make up for the loss. He put all the effects under shelter, and placed guards round them. The Admiral was evidently touched to the heart, as well he might be, by the kindness of these Indians. He thus expresses himself, "they are a loving, uncovetous people, so docile in all things, that I assure your Highnesses I believe in all the world there is not a better people, or a better country: they love their neighbours as themselves, and they have the sweetest and gentlest way of talking in the world, and always with a smile."<sup>2</sup>

✓ The Admiral resolved to found a colony in Guacanagari's land, "having found such good will and such signs of gold."<sup>3</sup> In relating this, the Spanish historian, Herrera, makes some curious reflections. He looks upon the loss of the vessel as providential, in order that the true faith

<sup>1</sup> [The Journal (Hak. Soc. ed., p. 133) says that the officer whose watch it was, and who deserted, was Juan de la Cossa, the owner and master of the ship, and, in after years, the well known pilot and cosmographer.]

<sup>2</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> HERRERA, dec. I, lib. I. c. 18.—There is a good expression of Oviedo's, when describing the friendship of these Indians and the reliance which the Admiral placed in them: "The Admiral seeing that this people were so '*domestic*' it appeared to him that he might safely leave some Christians there in order that during his return to Spain they might learn the language and customs."—*Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 2, cap. 6.

might be preached in that country. Then he says, how Providence causes its work to be done, not on high motives only, but also on the ordinary ones which influence mankind. He concludes by observing that Providence dealt with the Indians as a prudent father who has an ugly daughter, but makes up for her ugliness by the help of a large dowry. By the ugliness in this case he means the seas to be traversed, the hunger to be endured, and the labours to be undertaken, which he considers no other nation but the Spaniards would have encountered, even with the hope of greater booty. There we may venture to differ from him.

Columbus built a fort and called it La Navidad, because he entered the port near there on Christmas-day. He remained on very friendly terms with the good Cacique Guacanagari; and might have established himself most advantageously in that part of the country, if he could have been content to be a settler. But from the first moment of his discovery, he, doubtless, had an anxious desire to get back to Spain, and tell what he knew; and at times, perhaps, was fearful lest his grand secret, through some mischance to the expedition, should still perish with him. The great discoverer, therefore, now prepared to return homewards. He left his fort in trust to a small body of his followers,<sup>1</sup> whom he commended to the good offices of Guacanagari, not forgetting to impress upon them the excellent advice—to do no violence to man or woman, and, in short, to make their actions conformable to the

<sup>1</sup> They were forty in number, and it would be strange to find, but for the well-known fact that nothing brings men of different races together more than maritime and commercial enterprise, that in this small list there is an Irishman, "Guillermo Ires (*Qy.*, *William Herries, or Rice*) natural de Galney, en Irlanda"; and an Englishman, "Tallarte de Lajes (*Qy.*, *Arthur Lake*) ingles." See 'lista de las personas que Colon dejó en la Isla Española.'—NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 13. [Forty-four according to later investigations. Columbus left them well armed, with bread and wine for a year, and much merchandise for barter. "Guillermo Ires" is possibly Wm. Irish. Sir Clements Markham suggests that "Tallarte de Lajes" was an Englishman who had settled at Lajes, near Corunna, and that "Tallarte" was a Spanish form of Alard, a well-known Winchelsea family name.]

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idea (which the Indians first entertained of them) that they had come from heaven:—then, having received the necessary provisions for his vessel from the friendly Cacique, the Admiral set sail for Spain on the 4th of January 1493.

## CHAPTER II

### ADMINISTRATION OF COLUMBUS IN THE INDIES

**A**S this history does not undertake to give a life of Columbus, it is not requisite to relate the minor discoveries which he made after leaving La Navidad, or the troubles and difficulties he had on his voyage homewards, or his reception at Lisbon, where he was obliged to take refuge from a storm, and where displaying the signs of a new world at a court which had refused to aid in the discovery must have been almost too much of a triumph for a generous mind. Suffice it to say, that he arrived at Palos, the port he had set out from, on the 15th of March 1493, and forthwith commenced his journey to Barcelona, where the court then was. Herrera tells us, that the Admiral now "entered into the greatest reputation"; and the historian goes on to explain to his readers what the meaning of "reputation" is. It does not consist, he tells us, in success, but in doing something which cannot be easily comprehended, which compels men to think over and over again about it.<sup>1</sup> And certainly, this definition makes the word particularly applicable to the achievement of Columbus.

The court prepared a solemn reception for the Admiral at Barcelona, where the people poured out in such numbers to see him, that the streets could not contain them. A triumphal procession like his the world had not yet seen: it was a thing to make the most incurious alert, and even the sad and solitary student content to come out and mingle with the mob. The captives that accompanied a Roman general's car might be strange barbarians, of a tribe from which Rome had not before had slaves. But barbarians were not unknown creatures. Here, with Columbus, were beings of a new world. We may imagine

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. I, lib. 2, cap. 3.

the rumours that must have gone before his coming. And now he was there. Ferdinand and Isabella had their thrones placed in the presence of the assembled court. Columbus approached the Monarchs, and then, his countenance beaming with modest satisfaction (*modesta risa*), knelt at the King's feet, and begged leave to kiss their Highnesses' hands. They gave their hands: then they bade him rise, and be seated before them. He recounted, briefly, the events of his voyage—a story more interesting than the tale told by Æneas in the court of Dido—and he concluded his unpretending narrative by showing what new things and creatures he had brought with him.

Ferdinand and Isabella fell on their knees, giving thanks to God with many tears; and then the choristers of the royal chapel closed the grand ceremonial by singing the "Te Deum." Afterwards men walked home grave and yet happy, having seen the symbol of a great work: something to be thought over for many a generation.

Other marks of approbation for Columbus were not wanting. The agreement between him and Los Reyes (Ferdinand and Isabella will, henceforth, be often called Los Reyes, as they are in the histories of that time) was confirmed. An appropriate coat of arms, then a thing of much significance, was granted to him in augmentation of his own. In the shield are conspicuously emblazoned the royal arms of Castille and Leon.<sup>1</sup> Nothing can better serve to show the immense favour which Columbus had obtained at court by his discovery than such a grant; and it is but a trifling addition to make, in recounting his new honours, that the title of Don was given to him<sup>2</sup> and his

<sup>1</sup> [The arms were granted on 20th May 1493. Mr Harriase (*Christophe Colomb*, ii, p. 169) shows that it is a mistake to suppose that the arms of Castille and Leon were granted to him, and that the alterations which made the Castle and Lion in his shield resemble the royal arms were unauthorised modifications of his own. The motto was not added until long after the death of Colombus, being first mentioned by Oviedo in his history printed in 1535. Nor, again, was it until some time after his decease that the term "New World" was used; Colombus lived and died in the belief that he had found the eastern coasts and islands of Asia. In the matter of the arms Sir Arthur Helps followed Oviedo.]

<sup>2</sup> [The agreement made before he sailed ennobled him, and entitled him to be called "Don."]



descendants, and also to his brothers. He rode by the King's side; was served at table as a Grandee; "All Hail" was said to him on state occasions; and the men of his age, happy in that, had found out another great man to honour.

The more prosaic part of the business had then to be attended to. Los Reyes applied to the Pope, Alexander the Sixth, to confer on the Crowns of Castille and Leon the lands discovered, and to be discovered, in the Indies. To this application they soon received a favourable answer. The Pope granted to the Princes of Castille and Leon, and to their successors, the sovereign empire and principality of the Indies and of the navigation there, with high and royal jurisdiction and imperial dignity and lordship over all that hemisphere. To preserve the peace between Spain and Portugal, the pontiff divided the Spanish and Portuguese Indian sovereignties, by an imaginary line drawn from pole to pole, one hundred leagues to the west of the Azores and the Cape de Verde Islands.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the preparations were being made for a

<sup>1</sup> It is conjectured by Humboldt that this imaginary line had reference to the line of no variation noticed by Columbus, or rather to be inferred from his observations of the variation of the needle on those occasions which had caused the sailors such terrors in his first voyage. For several curious and interesting observations on this Papal Bull, see Humboldt, *Examen Critique de l'Histoire du Nouveau Continent*, III, p. 52, note.

[There were three Papal Bulls issued, two on 3rd May 1493, and one on 4th May. The first two granted Castille the countries discovered, and to be discovered, on the same conditions as its eastern discoveries were confirmed to Portugal; the third defined the commencement of the Spanish sovereignty as starting from a meridian running north and south one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde, leaving it uncertain whether the cape or the group of islands was meant, and although neither is in the same longitude as the Azores. Portugal felt itself aggrieved, and fitted out a large fleet, but negotiations ensued, and a treaty between the two powers was signed at Tordesillas on 7th June 1494, by which the line was shifted to 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. As no particular island was named as the base from which the 370 leagues were to be measured, the omission eventually caused serious difficulties. For a full study of the subject, see Mr H. Harrisse's *Diplomatic History of North America*, London, 1897. It was this longitudinal meridian, not the equator, that gave origin to the old saying, "No peace beyond the Line."]

second voyage to be undertaken by the Admiral. After the arrival of the Apostolic Bulls, and before the departure of Columbus from Barcelona, the nine Indians brought by him were baptized. Here, parenthetically, we may take note of something which, if the fact did correspond with what the Spaniards thought about it, would indeed be notable. One of the Indians, after being baptized, died; and was, we are told, the first of that nation, according to pious belief, who entered Heaven.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot help thinking of the hospitable and faithful Guacanagari, and imagining, that if his race had been like him, some one might already have reached the regions of the blessed. I do not, however, refer to this passage of Herrera for its boldness or its singularity, but because it brings before us again the profound import attached to baptism in those times, and may help to account for many seeming inconsistencies in the conduct of the Spaniards to the Indians.

In the conduct, however, of Los Reyes towards the Indians, there was nothing equivocal; but all that they did, showed the tenderness and religious care of these monarchs for their new subjects. The instructions which Columbus carried out in his second voyage, dated the 29th of May 1493, are the first strokes upon that obdurate mass of colonial difficulty, which at last, by incessant working of great princes, great churchmen, and great statesmen, was eventually to be hammered into some righteous form of wisdom and of mercy. In the course of these instructions, the Admiral is ordered to labour in all possible ways to bring the dwellers in the Indies to a knowledge of the Holy Catholic Faith. And that this may the easier be done, all the armada is to be charged to deal "lovingly" with the Indians: the Admiral is to make them presents, and to "honour them much"; and if by chance any person or persons should treat the Indians ill, in any manner whatever, the Admiral is to chastize

<sup>1</sup> "And because they themselves begged for baptism, the Catholic Kings thought fit to offer our Lord the first fruits of these heathens, and the King and his son, Prince John, were godfathers; the Prince desired that one of the Indians should remain in his household in his service, who died not long after; according to pious belief, he was the first of that nation to go to Heaven."—HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 2, cap. 5.

such ill-doers severely.<sup>1</sup> Their Highnesses also, to ensure an authorized teaching of the Faith, sent out a certain Father Buil with other ecclesiastics, to superintend the religious education of the Indians.

With these instructions, Columbus set sail again the 25th of September 1493, having with him seventeen vessels and fifteen hundred men. After making various discoveries, which we need not follow out, the Admiral arrived at Hispaniola,<sup>2</sup> and had the misfortune to find his little colony at La Navidad entirely destroyed. The account of this which Guacanagari gave to Columbus, and which I see no reason for doubting, is, that the Spaniards who had been left at La Navidad, took to evil courses, quarrelled amongst themselves,<sup>3</sup> straggled about the country, and finally were set upon, when weak and few in numbers, by a neighbouring Indian chief, named Caonabó, who burned the tower and killed or dispersed the garrison, none of whom was ever discovered.<sup>4</sup> Columbus built another fort in a different part of the island, and called his new colony Isabella. Hearing of the mines of Cibao, he sent to reconnoitre them; and the Indians, little foreseeing what was to come of it, gave gold to the Spanish messengers, who thereupon returned

<sup>1</sup> "Since it has pleased our Lord God through His divine mercy to permit the discovery of the said countries for the King and Queen, through the diligence of the said Don Christopher Columbus, their Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor of the same, who having made relation to their Highnesses that there are many people in the said lands very fit to be converted to our Holy Catholic Faith, which is very pleasing to their Highnesses because it is right that principal regard should be had to the service of God and the teaching of the Holy Catholic Faith . . . they order and command the said Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor, that by all ways and means possible he shall strive to bring the said inhabitants of the islands and mainland to be converted."—NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 45.

<sup>2</sup> [At La Navidad on 28th November 1493.]

<sup>3</sup> [The Spaniards "began to quarrel among themselves, and each to take as much gold and as many women as he could obtain."]

<sup>4</sup> This is the more to be regretted, as we might possibly have had from the Englishman or the Irishman an account of the first voyage of Columbus in our own language.

[Some of the Spanish officers, among whom was Father Buil, who had been sent out to teach the Indians "peace and goodwill," were eager to make an example of Guacanagari and his tribe with fire and sword.]

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with good signs of success. Columbus accordingly resolved to found a colony at Cibao.

At this period, January 1494, Columbus sent home an account of the state of his colony. It is in the form of instructions to a certain Antonio de Torres, the Receiver of the colony, who was to proceed to the Court of Spain, and inform the Monarchs of such things as were written in these instructions, and doubtless to elucidate them by discourse—as in the present day, we send a despatch to be read by an ambassador to the foreign minister of the power we are treating with. There remains a copy, made at the time, of this document, and of the notes in the margin containing the resolutions of Los Reyes. The original, thus noted, was taken back to Columbus. It is a most valuable document, very illustrative of the cautious and wise dealing of the Catholic Sovereigns.

The document begins with the usual strain of complimentary address to great personages. "*Their Highnesses hold it for good service,*" is the marginal remark.

The next paragraph consists of a general statement of the discoveries that have been made. "*Their Highnesses give much thanks to God, and hold as very honoured service all that the Admiral has done.*"

Then follow the Admiral's reasons why he has not been able to send home more gold. His people have been ill; it was necessary to keep guard, &c. "*He has done well*" is in the margin.

He suggests the building a fortress near the place where gold can be got. Their Highnesses approve; and the note in the margin is, "*This is well, and so it must be done.*"

Then comes a paragraph about provisions, and a marginal order from Los Reyes, "*that Juan de Fonseca is to provide for that matter.*"

Again, there comes another paragraph about provisions, complaining, amongst other things, that the casks, in which the wine for the armada had been put, were leaky. Their Highnesses make an order in the margin, "*that Juan de Fonseca is to find out the persons who played this cheat with the wine-casks, and to make good from their pockets the loss,*

and to see that the canes" (sugar canes for planting, I suppose,) "are good, and that all that is here asked for be provided immediately."

So far, nothing can run more pleasantly with the main document than the notes in the margin. Columbus now touches upon a matter which intimately concerns our subject. He desires his agent to inform their Highnesses, that he has sent home some Indians from the Cannibal Islands as slaves, to be taught Castillian, and to serve afterwards as interpreters, so that the work of conversion may go on. His arguments in support of this proceeding are weighty. He speaks of the good that it will be to take these people away from cannibalism and to have them baptized, for so they will gain their souls, as he expresses it. Then, too, with regard to the other Indians, he remarks, we shall have great credit from them, seeing that we can capture and make slaves of these Cannibals, of whom they, the peaceable Indians, entertain so great a fear. Such arguments must be allowed to have much force in them; and it may be questioned whether many of those persons who, in these days, are the strongest opponents of slavery, would then have had that perception of the impending danger of its introduction which Los Reyes appear to have entertained, from their answer to this part of the document. "*This is very well, and so it must be done; but let the Admiral see whether it could not be managed there*" (i.e. in the Cannibal Islands), "*that they should be brought to our Holy Catholic Faith, and the same thing with the Indians of those islands where he is.*"

The Admiral's despatch goes much further: in the next paragraph he boldly suggests that, for the advantage of the souls of these Cannibal Indians, the more of them that could be taken, the better: and that, considering what quantities of live stock and other things are required for the maintenance of the colony, a certain number of caravels should be sent each year with these necessary things, and the cargoes be paid for in slaves taken from amongst the Cannibals.<sup>1</sup> He touches again on the good that will be done to the Cannibals themselves; alludes

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 253.

to the customs duties that their Highnesses may levy upon them; and concludes by desiring Antonio de Torres to send, or bring, an answer, "because the preparations here" (for capturing these Cannibals) "may be carried on with more confidence, if the scheme seem good to their Highnesses."

At the same time that we must do Columbus the justice to believe that his motives were right in his own eyes, it must be admitted that a more distinct suggestion for the establishment of a slave-trade was never proposed. To their honour, Ferdinand and Isabella thus replied, "*As regards this matter, it is suspended for the present, until there come some other way of doing it there, and let the Admiral write what he thinks of this.*"<sup>1</sup>

This is rather a confused answer, as often happens, when a proposition from a valued friend or servant is disapproved of, but has to be rejected kindly. The Catholic Sovereigns would have been very glad to have received some money from the Indies: money was always welcome to King Ferdinand: the purchase of wines, seeds, and cattle for the colonists had hitherto proved anything but a profitable outlay: the prospect of conversion was probably dear to the hearts of both of these Princes, certainly to one of them: but still this proposition for the establishment of slavery was wisely and magnanimously set aside.

While Antonio de Torres was absent from Hispaniola, laying these propositions before Los Reyes, Columbus was busy about the affairs of the colony, which were in a most distracted state. The number of men which the Admiral had brought out with him was disproportionate to his means of sustaining them. Provisions and medicines began to fail; sickness pervaded the whole armament; and men of all ranks and stations—hidalgoes, people of the court and ecclesiastics—were obliged to labour manually under regulations strictly enforced. The rage and vexation of these men, many of whom had come out with the notion of finding gold ready for them on the sea

<sup>1</sup> "En este se ha suspendido por agora hasta que venga otro camino de allá, y escriba el Almirante lo que en esto le pareciere."—NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 233.

shore, may be imagined; and complaints of the Admiral's harsh way of dealing with those under him (probably no harsher than was absolutely necessary to save them) now took their rise, and pursued him ever after to his ruin. The colonists, however, were somewhat cheered after a time by hearing of gold mines and seeing specimens of ore brought from thence; and the Admiral went himself and founded the Fort of St. Thomas in the mining district of Cibao. But the Spaniards gained very little real advantage from these gold mines, which they began to work before they had consolidated around them the means of living: in fact, dealing with the mines in Hispaniola as if they had been discovered in an old country, where the means of transit and supplies of provisions can with certainty be procured.

There was also another evil, besides that of inconsiderate mining, and perhaps quite as mischievous a one, which stood in the way of the steady improvement of these early Spanish colonies. The Catholic sovereigns had unfortunately impressed upon Columbus their wish that he should devote himself to further discovery, a wish but too readily adopted and furthered by his enterprising spirit. The hankering of the Spanish monarchs for further discovery was fostered by their jealousy of the Portuguese. The Portuguese were making their way towards India, going eastward. They, the Spaniards, thought they were discovering India, going westward. The more rapidly, therefore, each nation could advance and plant its standard, the more of much-coveted India it would hereafter be able to claim. Acting upon such views, Columbus now proceeded onwards, bent upon further discovery, notwithstanding that his little colonies at Isabella and St. Thomas must have needed all his sagacity to protect them, and all his authority to restrain them. He nominated a council to manage the government during his absence, with his brother Don Diego as President of it; he appointed a certain Don Pedro Margarite as Captain-General; and then put to sea, the 24th of April 1494.

In the course of the voyage that then ensued, the Admiral made many important discoveries, amongst them

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Jamaica,<sup>1</sup> and the cluster of little islands called the "Garden of the Queen." The navigation amongst these islands was so difficult, that the Admiral is said to have been thirty-two days without sleeping. Certain it is, that after he had left the island called La Mona, and when he was approaching the island of San Juan, a drowsiness which Las Casas calls "pestilential," but which might reasonably be attributed to the privations, cares, and anxieties which the Admiral had now undergone for many months, seized upon him and entirely deprived him for a time of the use of his senses.<sup>2</sup>

His object in going to San Juan was to capture cannibals there; and Las Casas looks upon this lethargical attack as a judgment upon the Admiral for so unjust a manner of endeavouring to introduce Christianity. The mariners turned the fleet homewards to Isabella, where they arrived the 29th of September 1494, bearing with them their helpless commander.

On Columbus's arrival at Isabella, where he remained ill for five months, he found his brother Bartholomew Columbus, whose presence gladdened him exceedingly. His brothers were very dear to the Admiral, as may be gathered from a letter to his eldest son Diego, in which he bids him make much of his brother Ferdinand, the son of Beatrice; for, says he, "Ten brothers would not be too many for you. I have never found better friends, on my right hand and on my left, than my brothers." Afterwards came Antonio de Torres with provisions and all things needful for the colony. But nothing, we are told, delighted the Admiral so much as the despatches from court; for he was a faithful, loyal man, who loved to do his duty to those who employed him, and to have his faithfulness recognized. Peace or delight, however, was not at any time to be long enjoyed by Columbus. He found his colony in a sad state of disorganization: the Indians were in arms against the Spaniards; and Father

<sup>1</sup> [On 4th May (o.s.) 1494.]

<sup>2</sup> "A pestilential drowsiness which completely deprived him of his senses and his physical strength, leaving him unconscious, and it was not thought that he would live for a day."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiii, p. 70.



## INDIANS WANTONLY OPPRESSED 99

Bail, Don Pedro Margarite and other principal persons had gone home to Spain in the ship which had brought Bartholomew Columbus.

The Admiral, before his departure, had given a most injudicious command to Margarite, namely, to put himself at the head of four hundred men and go through the country with the twofold object of impressing upon the natives a respect for the power of the Spaniards, and of freeing the colony from supporting these four hundred men. The instructions to Margarite were, to observe the people and the natural productions of the country through which he should pass; to do rigorous justice, so that the Spaniards should be prevented from injuring the Indians, or the Indians the Spaniards; to treat the Indians kindly; to obtain provisions by purchase, if possible, if not, by any other means; and to capture Caonabó and his brothers either by force or artifice.<sup>1</sup>

The proceedings of the men under Margarite were similar to those of the Spaniards formerly left at La Navidad. They went straggling over the country; they consumed the provisions of the poor Indians, astonishing them by their voracious appetites; waste, rapine, injury and insult followed in their steps; and from henceforth there was but little hope of the two races living peaceably together in those parts, at least upon equal terms. The Indians were now swarming about the Spaniards with hostile intent: as a modern historian well describes the situation, "they had passed from terror to despair";<sup>2</sup> and, but for the opportune arrival of the Admiral, the

<sup>1</sup> "He ordered Caonabó and his brother only to be seized by force or cunning, as accounts were every day received of the ferocity of this Cacique's character."—MUNOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. 5, cap. 10.

<sup>2</sup> "Their (the Spaniards') outrages increased to such a degree that the inhabitants of the Vega were no longer able to endure them. The soldiers, without any head to keep them together or control them, wandered in pillaging parties, allowing themselves every freedom necessity, passion, or lust dictated. Tired of suffering, the miserable Indians passed from terror to despair. The weakness of their arms was compensated by numbers, and they began to kill the Spaniards; as their multitudes increased, they continued their hostilities; they began to pillage the new establishments of their enemies, and drove them back into the towns and forts, and even then they continued to harass them."—MUNOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. 5, cap. 25.

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Spanish settlements in Hispaniola might again have been entirely swept away.

Caonabó, the Cacique who in former days had put to death the garrison at La Navidad, was now threatening that of St. Thomas, the fort which the Admiral had caused to be built in the mining district of Cibao. Guatiguana, the Cacique of Macorix, who had killed eight Spanish soldiers and set fire to a house where there were forty ill, was now within two days' march of Isabella, besieging the fort Magdalena. Columbus started up forthwith, went off to Magdalena, engaged the Indians and routed them utterly. He took a large part of them for slaves, and reduced to obedience the whole of the province of Macorix. Returning to Isabella, he sent back, on the 24th of February 1495, the four ships which Antonio de Torres had brought out, chiefly laden with Indian slaves.<sup>1</sup> It is rather remarkable that the very ships which brought that admirable reply from Ferdinand and Isabella to Columbus, begging him to seek some other way to Christianity than through slavery, even for wild man-devouring Caribs, should come back full of slaves taken from amongst the mild islanders of Hispaniola.

Caonabó, not daunted by the fate of Guatiguana, still continued to molest St. Thomas. The Admiral accordingly sallied out with two hundred men against this Cacique.<sup>2</sup> On the broad plains of the Vega Real the Spaniards found an immense number of Indians collected together, amounting, it is said, to one hundred thousand men.<sup>3</sup> The Admiral divided his forces into two bands, giving the command of one to his brother Bartholomew, and leading the other himself; and when the brothers made an attack upon the Indians at the same time from different quarters, this numerous host was at once and

<sup>1</sup> [Five hundred according to Bernaldez (*Reyes Catolicos*); he adds that most of them died of the climate.]

<sup>2</sup> [Authorities differ as to the time when Caonabó was captured by Alonso de Ojeda (see *post*, p. 101), and whether it was Caonabó or his brother who commanded the Indians in the battle of the Vega Real. The statement in the text is that of Las Casas. Herrera places the incident of capture earlier.]

<sup>3</sup> [On 24th March 1495. HERRERA, dec. 1, book 2, cap. 17.]

utterly put to flight. In speaking of such a defeat, the modern reader must not be lavish of the words "cowardly" "pusillanimous," and the like, until, at least, he has well considered what it is to expose naked bodies to firearms, to the charge of steel-clad men on horseback, and to the clinging ferocity of bloodhounds. A "horrible carnage" ensued upon the flight of the Indians. Many of them, less fortunate, perhaps, than those who were slain, being taken alive, were condemned to slavery.<sup>1</sup> Caonabó, however, who was besieging the fortress of St. Thomas at the time of the battle of the Vega Real, remained untaken. The Admiral resolved to secure the person of this Cacique by treachery; and sent Ojeda (a man of whom we shall hear much hereafter in this history) to cajole Caonabó into coming to a friendly meeting. There are some curious instructions of Columbus's to Margarite in 1494,<sup>2</sup> respecting a plot to take this formidable Caonabó. They are as thoroughly base and treacherous as can well be imagined. This time the Admiral's plan was completely successful.

The story<sup>3</sup> which was current in the colonies, of the manner in which Ojeda captured the resolute Indian chief, is this. Ojeda carried with him gyves and manacles, the latter of the kind called by the Spaniards somewhat satirically, *esposas* (wives), and all made of brass (*laton*), or steel, finely wrought, and highly polished. The metals of Spain were prized by the Indians in the same way that the gold of the Indies was by the Spaniards. Moreover, amongst the Indians, there was a strange rumour of talking brass, that arose from their listening to the church bell at Isabella, which, summoning the Spaniards to mass, was thought by the simple Indians to converse with them. Indeed, the natives of Hispaniola held the Spanish metals in such estimation, that they applied to them an Indian word, *Turey*, which seems to have signified anything that descends from Heaven.<sup>4</sup> When, therefore, Ojeda brought

<sup>1</sup> MUÑOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. 5, cap. 27.

<sup>2</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 72.

<sup>3</sup> The learned MUÑOZ considers this story as a legend. (See the prologue to his *History*.) I do not know why it should be so considered.

<sup>4</sup> "The stratagem was this; as the Indians call our *laton* *Turey*, and, like the other metals we have brought from Spain, admire it so

these ornaments to Caonabó, and told him they were Biscayan *Turey*, and that they were a great present from the Admiral, and that he would show him how to put them on, and that when they were put on, Caonabó should set himself on Ojeda's horse and be shown to his admiring subjects, as, Ojeda said, the kings of Spain were wont to show themselves to theirs; the incautious Indian is said to have fallen entirely into the trap. Going with Ojeda, accompanied by only a small escort, to a river a short distance from his main encampment, Caonabó, after performing ablutions, suffered the crafty young Spaniard to put the heaven-descended fetters on him, and to set him upon the horse. Ojeda himself got up behind the Indian Prince, and then whirling a few times round, like a pigeon before it takes its determined flight, making the followers of Caonabó imagine this was but display, they all the while keeping at a respectful distance from the horse, an animal they much dreaded, Ojeda darted off for Isabella; and after great fatigues, now keeping to the main track, now traversing the woods in order to evade pursuit, brought Caonabó bound into the presence of Columbus. The unfortunate Cacique was sent to Spain to be judged there<sup>1</sup>; and his forces were afterwards put to flight by a troop of Spaniards under the command of the same Ojeda. Some were killed; some taken prisoners; some fled to the forests and the mountains; some yielded, "offering themselves to the service of the Christians, if they would allow them to live in their own ways."<sup>2</sup>

Never, perhaps, were little skirmishes, for such they were on the part of the Spaniards, of greater permanent importance than those above narrated, which took place in the early part of the year 1495. They must be looked

greatly as to regard it as a thing come from Heaven, because they call *Turey* Heaven, and so make ornaments of them, especially of laton, Alonso de Ojeda took fetters and handcuffs very well made, thin and light, and highly polished and burnished, as a present from the Admiral, telling him that they were *Turey* of Biscay, as much as to say that it was something very precious come from Heaven."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiii, p. 85.

[Laton, or latten, was a mixed metal resembling brass; there was also a white laton made of brass and tin.]

<sup>1</sup> [He died at sea during the voyage to Spain.]

<sup>2</sup> [MUNOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. 5, cap. 29.]

upon as the origin in the Indies of slavery, vassalage, and the system of *repartimientos*. We have seen that the Admiral, after his first victory, sent off four ships with slaves to Spain. He now took occasion to impose a tribute upon the whole population of Hispaniola. It was thus arranged. Every Indian above fourteen years old, who was in the provinces of the mines, or near to these provinces, was to pay every three months a little bell-ful of gold<sup>1</sup>; all other persons in the island were to pay at the same time an *arroba* of cotton for each person. Certain brass or copper tokens were made—different ones for each tribute time—and were given to the Indians when they paid tribute; and these tokens, being worn about their necks, were to show who had paid tribute.<sup>2</sup> A remarkable proposal was made upon this occasion to the Admiral by Guarionéx, Cacique of the Vega Real, namely, that he would institute a huge farm for the growth of corn and manufacture of bread, stretching from Isabella to St. Domingo (i.e. from sea to sea), which would suffice to maintain all Castille with bread. The Cacique would do this on condition that his vassals were not to pay tribute in gold, as they did not know how to collect that. But this proposal was not accepted, because Columbus wished to have tribute in such things as he could send over to Spain.<sup>3</sup>

This tribute is considered to have been a most unreasonable one in point of amount;<sup>4</sup> and Columbus was obliged to modify his demands upon these poor Indians, and in some instances to change the nature of them. It appears that in 1496 service instead of tribute was demanded of

<sup>1</sup> ["Hawk's bell." HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 2, cap. 17.]

<sup>2</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 2, cap. 17.

<sup>3</sup> "Guarionéx, King of the Great Royal Plain, offered the Admiral to sow corn through the whole country from Isabella to San Domingo, which is from sea to sea, being full 55 leagues in distance, and sufficient to supply all Castille with bread, if he would spare him the tribute of gold, because his vassals did not know how to collect it. But the Admiral, being a foreigner, alone and envied by the ministers of the Catholic Kings, and, as a prudent man, knowing that the wealth he sent home was the only thing that maintained his influence, insisted on the gold."—HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 2, cap. 17.

<sup>4</sup> "An oppressive requisition, and ordered without consideration."—MUÑOZ, lib. 5, cap. 30.

certain Indian villages; and as the villagers were ordered to make (and work), the farms in the Spanish settlements,<sup>1</sup> this may be considered as the beginning of the system of *repartimientos*, or *encomiendas*, as they were afterwards called.

We must not, however, suppose that Indian slavery would not have taken place by means of Columbus, even if these uprisings and defeats of the Indians in the course of the year 1495 had never occurred. Very early indeed we see what the Admiral's views were with regard to the Indians. In the diary which he kept of his first voyage, on the 14th of October, three days after discovering the New World, he describes a position which he thinks would be a very good one for a fort; and he goes on to say, "I do not think that it (the fort) will be necessary, for this people is very simple in the use of arms (as your Highnesses will see from seven of them that I have taken in order to bring them to you, to learn our language and afterwards to take them back); so that when your Highnesses command, you can have them all taken to Castille or kept in the island as captives."<sup>2</sup>

Columbus was not an avaricious, nor a cruel man; and certainly he was a very pious one; but early in life he had made voyages along the coast of Africa, and he was accustomed to a slave trade. Moreover, he was anxious to reduce the expenses of these Indian possessions to the Catholic Sovereigns, to prove himself in the right as to all he had said respecting the advantages that would flow to Spain from the Indies, and to confute his enemies at court.

Those who have read the instructions to Columbus given by Catholic Monarchs will naturally be curious to know how the news of the arrival of these vessels laden with slaves, the fruit of the Admiral's first victory over the Indians, was received by Los Reyes, recollecting how tender they had been about slavery before. This, however, was a very different case from the former one.

<sup>1</sup> "Before the Admiral went to Castille, in the year 1496, in March, or soon after his departure, in place of tribute, some towns were charged to till the lands belonging to the Spanish settlements, as they had been used to do for their Caciques."—HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 3, cap. 13.

<sup>2</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col.*, i, p. 2.

Here were people taken in what would be called rebellion—prisoners of war. Still we find that Ferdinand and Isabella were heedful in their proceedings in this matter. There is a letter of theirs to Bishop Fonseca, who managed Indian affairs, telling him to withhold receiving the money for the sale of these Indians that Torres had brought with him, until their Highnesses should be able to inform themselves from men learned in the law, theologians and canonists, whether with good conscience these Indians could be ordered to be sold or not.<sup>1</sup> One who has been indefatigable in his researches<sup>2</sup> amongst the documents relating to Spanish America, declares that he cannot find that the point was decided; and if he has failed, we are not likely to discover any direct evidence about the decision. We shall hereafter, however, find something which may enable us to conjecture what the decision practically came to be.

Many of the so-called free Indians in Hispaniola had, perhaps, even a worse fate than that which fell to the lot of their brethren condemned to slavery. These free men, seeing the Spaniards quietly settling down in their island, building houses, and making forts, and no vessels in the harbour of Isabella to take them away, fell into the profoundest sadness, and bethought them of the desperate remedy of attempting to starve the Spaniards out, by not sowing nor planting anything. But this is a shallow device, when undertaken on the part of the greater number, in any country, against the smaller. The scheme reacted upon themselves. They had intended to gain a secure though scanty sustenance in the forests and upon the mountains; but though the Spaniards suffered bitterly from famine, they were only driven by it to further pursuit and molestation of the Indians, who died in great numbers, of hunger, sickness, and misery.

About this period there arrived in the Indies from the court of Spain a commissioner of inquiry (*Juez pesquisidor*), his mission being doubtless occasioned by the various complaints made against the Admiral by Father Buil,

<sup>1</sup> NAV., Col. Dip., No. 92.

<sup>2</sup> The historian Muñoz.

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Margarite, and the Spaniards who had returned from Hispaniola. The name of this commissioner was Juan Aguado, and his powers were vouched for by the following letter from Los Reyes :—

### “THE KING AND THE QUEEN

*“Cavaliers, Esquires, and other persons, who by our command are in the Indies: we send you thither Juan Aguado, our Gentleman of the Chamber, who will speak to you on our part: we command that you give him faith and credence.*

*“I the King: I the Queen.*

*“By the command of the King and Queen, our Lords.*

**“HERNAND ALVAREZ.**

*“Madrid, the ninth of April, one thousand four hundred and ninety-five.”*

The royal commissioner arrived at Isabella in October 1495, and his proceedings in the colony, together with the fear of what he might report on his return, quickened the Admiral's desire to return to court, that he might fight his own battles there, himself. Leaving, therefore, his brother Bartholomew as lieutenant-governor (*Adelantado*), the Admiral quitted Isabella on the 10th of March 1496, and anchored in the Bay of Cadiz the 11th of June in that year. He proceeded to Burgos, where the court then was, and appears to have been well received by Ferdinand and Isabella, and to have made his case good against all maligners. It was long, however, before he was able to return to Hispaniola with such an armament as he required. Meanwhile, about ten months after his arrival, he managed to send out two ships under Peter Fernandez Coronel with such things as were necessary for the colony. The Admiral himself did not leave Spain again until May 1498.

During the two years that elapsed from the Admiral's leaving Hispaniola in 1496 to his return there in 1498, many things happened on both sides of the Atlantic, which need recording. In 1496 we find, that Don Bartholomew Columbus sent to Spain three hundred



slaves from Hispaniola. He had previously informed Los Reyes that certain Caciques were killing the Castellians, and their Highnesses had given orders in reply, that all those who should be found guilty should be sent to Spain. If this meant the common Indians as well as the Caciques, then it seems probable that the question about selling them with a safe conscience was already decided.

In 1497, two very injudicious edicts were published by the Catholic Sovereigns, upon the advice, as we are told, of Columbus; one, authorizing the judges to transport criminals to the Indies; the other, giving an indulgence to all those who had committed any crime (with certain exceptions, among which heresy, lèse majesté, and treason, find a place) to go out at their own expense to Hispaniola, and to serve for a certain time under the orders of the Admiral.<sup>1</sup> The remembrance of this advice on his part, might well have shamed Columbus from saying, as he did three years afterwards in his most emphatic manner, "I swear that numbers of men have gone to the Indies who did not deserve water from God or man."<sup>2</sup> It is but fair, however, to mention that Las Casas, speaking of the colonists who went out under these conditions, says, "I have known some of them in these islands, even of those who had lost their ears, whom I always found sufficiently honest men."

In 1497, letters patent were issued from Los Reyes to the Admiral, authorizing him to grant *repartimientos* of the lands in the Indies to the Spaniards. It is noticeable that in this document there is no mention of Indians, so that they had not come to form portion of a *repartimiento* at this period. The document in question is of a formal character, expressed in the style of legal documents of the present

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, Nos. 116, 120. [There were two edicts of 22nd June 1497, one ordering that men and women, who had committed any crime meriting the mines or exile, were to be sent to Española, those who would have been exiled for life, for ten years, others for five years; the second permitted certain criminals to commute their sentences by serving for one or two years under Columbus. Another edict of 6th May 1497 exempted from all duties, household or agricultural necessities sent to Española.]

<sup>2</sup> Carta del Almirante al Ama del Príncipe.—NAV., *Col.*, i, p. 271.

day, by virtue of which the fortunate Spaniard who gets the land is "to have, and to hold, and to possess," and so forth; (*haya é tenga é posea*) and is enabled "to sell and to give, and to present, and to traffic with, and to exchange, and to pledge, and to alienate, and to do with it and in it all that he likes or may think good."<sup>1</sup>

While the acts of legislation above narrated, which cannot be said to have been favourable to good government in the Indies, were being framed at the court of Spain, Don Bartholomew Columbus was doing much in his administration of Hispaniola that led to very mischievous results.

Before the Admiral left the island, he had discovered some mines to the southward, and had thought of choosing a port in their vicinity, where he might establish a colony. He had spoken about this in his letters to the government at home. As he entered the Bay of Cadiz on his return, he met some vessels there, which were bound for Hispaniola, and which contained letters from their Highnesses approving of his suggestion. By these ships, therefore, he sent orders to his brother to make this southern settlement; and the Adelantado, accordingly, proceeded southwards, and fixed upon a port at the entrance of the river Ozama. He sent for artisans from Isabella, and commenced building a fortress which he called St. Domingo, and which afterwards became the chief port of the island.<sup>2</sup>

There is one part of Hispaniola into which the Spaniards had not yet penetrated: it was called Xaragua, and was

<sup>1</sup> Muñoz mentions that in order to encourage emigration to the Indies, the perpetual possession of the houses which they should build and the lands they should cultivate had been offered to the Spaniards in 1495.—MUNOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. 5, cap. 33.

[The Letters Patent are of 22nd July 1497. The Crown rights to brazil, or dye wood, and to all minerals, are reserved. A necessary condition was that the grantee should engage to live in Española for four years.]

<sup>2</sup> [It was originally built on the left bank of the river, and called New Isabella; this settlement was destroyed by a hurricane in 1504, when it was rebuilt on the right bank, and renamed San Domingo. The ruins of a palace, said by local tradition to have been built by Bartholomew or Diego Columbus, the brothers of the Admiral, are still to be seen on the left bank.]

reigned over by a Cacique named Bohechio, whose sister Anacaona, the wife of Caonabó, seems also to have had much authority in those parts. The Adelantado, after seeing the works at St. Domingo commenced, resolved to enter the kingdom of Xaragua, whither he proceeded at the head of one hundred men. Arriving at the river Neyba, he found an immense army of Indians drawn up there to oppose his progress. Don Bartholomew made signs to them that his errand was peaceful; and the good-natured Indians accepting his proffers of amity, he was conducted some thirty leagues further to the city of Xaragua, where he was received with processions of dancing and singing women, and feasted magnificently. After having been well entertained by these Indians, the Adelantado proceeded to business, and in plain terms demanded tribute of them. Bohechio pleaded that there was no gold in his dominions, to which the Adelantado replied, that he did not wish to impose tribute upon any people, except of the natural productions to be found in their country. It was finally settled that Bohechio should pay tribute in cotton and Cazabi-bread. He acceded to this agreement very willingly; and the Adelantado and this Cacique parted on the most friendly terms.

Don Bartholomew then returned to Isabella, where he found that about three hundred men had died from disease, and that there was great dearth of provisions. He distributed the sick men in his fortresses and in the adjacent Indian villages, and afterwards set out on a journey to his new fort of St. Domingo, collecting tribute by the way. In all these rapid and energetic proceedings of the Adelantado, and still more from causes over which he had no control, the Spaniards must have suffered much, and doubtless those complaints on their part which were soon to break out very menacingly, were not unheard at the present time.

If the Spaniards, however, complained of the labours which Don Bartholomew imposed upon them, the Indians complained still more, and far more justly, of the tribute imposed upon them. Several of the minor chiefs, upon this occasion of collecting tribute, complained to the

great Cacique Guarionéx, and suggested a rising of the Indians. This Cacique seems to have been a peaceful, prudent man, and well aware of the power of the Spaniards. But he now consented to place himself at the head of an insurrection, which, however, the Lieutenant Governor, soon made aware of it, quelled at once by a battle in which he was victorious over Guarionéx, taking him and other principal persons captive. The chief movers of the revolt were put to death; but Guarionéx was delivered up to his people, who flocked by thousands to his place of imprisonment, clamouring for his restitution.

About this time messengers came from Bohechio and Anacaona informing the Adelantado that the tribute of that country was ready for him; and he accordingly went to fetch it. During his absence from the seat of government, and under the less vigorous administration of Don Diego Columbus, who had been left at the head of affairs at Isabella, those discontents among the Spaniards, which had no doubt been rife for a long time, broke out in a distinct manner. I allude to the well-known insurrection of Roldan, whom the Admiral on his departure had left as chief-justice in the island. The proceedings between the chief-justice and the governor were to form an original to many similar ones to happen hereafter in many colonies even to our own times. It may be imagined that the family of Columbus were a hard race to deal with; and any one observing that the Admiral was very often engaged in disputes, and almost always in the right, might conjecture that he was one of those persons who pass through life proving that everybody about them is wrong, and going a great way to make them so. This would have been an easy mode of explaining many things, and therefore very welcome to a narrator; but it would not be at all just towards Columbus to saddle upon him any such character. The men and the circumstances he had to deal with were of the most difficult character. Here were men who had come out with very grand expectations, and who found themselves pinched with hunger, having dire storms to encounter, and vast labours to undergo; who were contained in due

bonds by no pressure of society ; who were commanded by a foreigner, or by members of his family, whom they knew to have many enemies at court ; who thought that Los Reyes themselves could scarcely reach them at this distance ; who imagined that they had worked themselves out of all law and order, and that they deserved an Alsatian immunity. With such men (many of them, perhaps, "not worthy of water") the Admiral and his brothers had to get useful work of all kinds done ; and did contrive to get vessels navigated, forts built, and some ideas of civilization maintained. But it was an arduous task at all times : and this Roldan did not furnish the least of the troubles which the Admiral and his brothers had to endure.

Roldan, too, if we could hear him, would probably have something to say. He wished, it appears, to return to Spain, as Father Buil and Margarite had done ; and urged that a certain caravel which the Governor Don Bartholomew Columbus had built, might be launched for that purpose. Such is the account of Ferdinand Columbus, who maintains that the said caravel could not be launched for want of tackle. He also mentions that Roldan complained of the restless life the Adelantado led his men, building forts and towns ; and said that there was no hope of the Admiral coming back to the colony with supplies. Without going into these squabbles,—and indeed it is very difficult when a quarrel of this kind breaks out, taking it up at the point where it breaks out, to judge it upon that only, seeing the stream of ill-will may have run underground for a long time—suffice it to say that Roldan and his men grew more and more insubordinate ; were not at all quelled by the presence of the Adelantado, on his return from Xaragua ; and finally quitted Isabella in a body. The Adelantado contrived to keep some men faithful to him, promising them, amongst other things, two slaves each. Negotiations then took place between the Adelantado and Roldan, which must be omitted for the present, to enter upon the further dealing of Don Bartholomew with the Indians.

These poor islanders were now harassed both by the rebels and by the loyal Spaniards, whom the Adelantado

could not venture to curb much, for fear of their going over to the other party. The Indians were also tempted by Roldan to join him, he contending that tribute had been unjustly imposed upon them. From all these difficulties Guarionéx made his escape by flying to the territories of Maiobanex, the Cacique of a hardy race, who inhabited the hilly country towards Cabron. This flight of Guarionéx was a very serious affair, as it threatened the extinction of tribute in that Cacique's territory, and Don Bartholomew accordingly pursued the fugitive Cacique. After some skirmishes with the troops of Maiobanex, in which, as usual, the Spaniards were victorious, the Adelantado sent a messenger to Maiobanex, telling him that the Spaniards did not seek war with him, but that he must give up the fugitive, otherwise his own territory would be destroyed by fire and sword. Maiobanex replied, "that every one knew that Guarionéx was a good man, endowed with all virtue," wherefore he judged him to be worthy of assistance and defence, but that they, the Spaniards, were violent and bad men, and that he would have neither friendship nor commerce with them.

Upon receiving this answer, the Adelantado burnt several villages and approached nearer to the camp of Maiobanex. Fresh negotiations were entered into: Maiobanex convoked an assembly of his people; and they contended, that Guarionéx ought to be given up, and cursed the day when first he came amongst them. Their noble chief, however, said, "that Guarionéx was a good man and deserved well at his hands, for he had given him many royal gifts when he came to him, and had taught him and his wife to join in choral songs and to dance, of which he made no little account and for which he was grateful: wherefore, he would be party to no treaty to desert Guarionéx, since he had fled to him, and he had pledged himself to take care of the fugitive: and would rather suffer all extremities than give detractors a cause for speaking ill, to say that he had delivered up his guest."<sup>1</sup> The assemblage of the people being dismissed, Maiobanex informed his guest that he would stand by him to the last.

<sup>1</sup> PETER MARTYR, *Decades*, 1, lib. 7.

The fugitive Cacique, however, finding that Maiobanex's people were ill-disposed towards him, quitted, of his own accord, their territory; but by so doing he was not enabled to save his generous host, who, with his family, was surprized and taken; and Guarionex himself being shortly afterwards captured and put in chains at Fort Concepcion, the two Caciques probably shared the same prison. Thus concludes a story, which, if it had been written by some Indian Plutarch, and the names had been more easy to pronounce, might have taken its just place amongst the familiar and household stories which we tell our children, to make them see the beauty of great actions.

The history now passes from the doings of the Adelantado to those of his brother the Admiral. Columbus had at last obtained sufficient supplies for his expedition, and had set forth from Spain with eight ships, the 30th of May 1498. In the course of this, his third voyage, he discovered Paria,<sup>1</sup> on the continent of America, where he made no stay however, being obliged to proceed to Hispaniola, which he reached on the 30th of August 1498. He found the state of his colony far from cheering, the defection of Roldan and his followers having put everything into confusion. The Admiral supposed at first that the enmity of Roldan's party was chiefly directed against the Adelantado, and the Admiral hoped that now he had arrived, some agreement would speedily be concluded with Roldan, of which he might inform the Catholic Sovereigns by the vessels which he purposed to send back immediately to Spain. This was very far, however, from being the case. These vessels, five in number, left the port of St. Domingo bearing no good news of peace and amity amongst the Spaniards, but laden with many hundreds of Indian slaves, which had been taken in the following manner. Some Cacique<sup>2</sup> failed to perform the personal services imposed upon him and his people, and fled to the forests; upon which orders were given to

<sup>1</sup> It will be desirable in a later part of the narrative to give an account of this third voyage of Columbus.

<sup>2</sup> LAS CASAS conjectures it to have been the Cacique of the Vega Real, and it might either be Guarionex or his successor.

pursue him, and a large number of slaves were captured and put into these ships. Columbus, in his letters to Los Reyes, enters into an account of the pecuniary advantage that will arise from these slave-dealing transactions, and from the sale of logwood. He estimates, that "in the name of the sacred Trinity" <sup>1</sup> there may be sent as many slaves as sale could be found for in Spain, and that the value of the slaves, for whom there would be a demand to the number of four thousand, as he calculated from certain information, and of the logwood, would amount to forty *cuentos* (i.e. forty million maravedis).<sup>2</sup> The number of slaves who were sent in these five ships was 600, of which 200 were given to the masters of the vessels in payment of freight. In the course of these letters, throughout which Columbus speaks after the fashion of a practised slave-dealer, he alludes to the intended adoption, on behalf of private individuals, of a system of exchange of slaves for goods wanted from the mother country. The proposed arrangement was as follows:—The masters of vessels were to receive slaves from the colonists, were to carry them to Spain, and to pay for their maintenance during the voyage; they were then to allow the colonists so much money payable at Seville, in proportion to the number of slaves brought over. This money they would expend according to the orders of the colonists, who would thus be able to obtain such goods as they might stand in need of.<sup>3</sup> It was upon the same occasion of writing home to Spain, that the Admiral strongly urged upon the Catholic Sovereigns that the Spanish colonists should be allowed to make use of the services of the Indians for a year or two until the colony should be in a settled state,<sup>4</sup> a proposal which he did not wait for their Highnesses' authority to carry out, and which led to a new form of the *repartimiento*. But this brings us back to Roldan's story, being closely connected with it.

After great trouble and many attempts at agreement, in which mention is more than once made of slaves,<sup>5</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiii, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent to about 12,345*l*. [See note, p. 66, *ante*.]

<sup>3</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiii, p. 348.

<sup>4</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiii, p. 348.

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. del Almirante*, BARCIA, cap. 80.



dispute between Roldan's party, rebels they might almost be called, and Columbus, was at last, after two years' negotiation, brought to a close. Roldan kept his chief-justiceship; and his friends received lands and slaves. It brings to mind the conclusion of many a long war in the Old World, in which two great powers have been contending against each other, with several small powers on each side, the latter being either ruined in the course of the war, or sacrificed at the end. The Admiral gave *repartimientos* to those followers of Roldan who chose to stay in the island, which were constituted in the following manner. The Admiral placed under such a Cacique so many thousand *matas* (shoots of the cazabi), or, which came to the same thing, so many thousand *montones* (small mounds a foot and a half high, and ten or twelve feet round, on each of which a cazabi shoot was planted); and Columbus then ordered that the Cacique or his people should till these lands for whomsoever they were assigned to.<sup>1</sup> The *repartimiento* had now grown to its second state—not lands only, but lands and the tillage of them. We shall yet find that there is a further step in this matter, before the *repartimiento* assumes its utmost development. It seems, too, that in addition to these *repartimientos*, Columbus gave slaves to those partizans of Roldan who stayed in the island. Others of Roldan's followers, fifteen in number, chose to return to Spain: they received a certain number of slaves, some one, some two, some three; and the Admiral sent them home in two vessels which left the port of St. Domingo at the beginning of October 1499.<sup>2</sup>

On the arrival in Spain of these vessels, the Queen was in the highest degree angered by the above proceedings, and said that the Admiral had received no authority from her to give her vassals to any one. She accordingly commanded proclamation to be made at Seville, Granada,

<sup>1</sup> "And from that began the allotments (*repartimientos*) or commanderies (*encomiendas*) throughout the Indies, because the Admiral granted them by his edicts, saying that he gave such a Cacique so many thousand cazabi shoots, or hillocks, which are the same, and that the Cacique or his people were to cultivate those lands for him to whom they were granted."—HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 3, cap. 16.

<sup>2</sup> [About 300 slaves.—HERRERA.]

and other places, that all persons who were in possession of Indians given to them by the Admiral should send those Indians back to Hispaniola under pain of death, "and that particularly they should send back those Indians, and not the others who had been brought before, because she was informed that they had been taken in just war."<sup>1</sup> The former part of this proclamation has been frequently alluded to, and no doubt it deserves much praise; but from the latter part it is clear that there were Indians who could justly, according to Queen Isabella, be made slaves. By this time, therefore, at any rate the question had been solved, whether by the learned in the law, theologians and canonists, I know not, but certainly in practice, that the Indians taken in war could be made slaves. The whole of this transaction is very remarkable, and in some measure inexplicable on the facts before us. There is nothing to show that the slaves given to Roldan's followers were made slaves in a different way from those who had been sent over on former occasions, both by the Admiral and his brother, for the benefit of the crown. And yet the Queen, whom no one has ever accused of condescending to state craft, seems to deal with this particular case as if it were something quite new. It cannot be said that the crown was favoured, for the question is put upon the legitimacy of the original capture; and to confirm this, there is a letter from the sovereigns to one of their household, from which it may be inferred, though the wording is rather obscure, that they, too, gave up the slaves which had come over for them on this occasion.<sup>2</sup>

Everybody would be sorry to take away any honour from Isabella; and all who are conversant with that period must wish that her proclamation could be proved

<sup>1</sup> "The Catholic Queen was highly indignant, and said that the Admiral had no authority from her to give anybody her subjects; she ordered proclamation to be made in Seville, Granada, and elsewhere that all those who had Indians given them from the Admiral should send them back to Española on pain of death, that these Indians in particular were to be returned, but not the others who had been brought before, because she was informed that the latter had been taken in open war."—HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 4, cap. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 134.

to have gone quite to the root of the matter; but at least it cannot be characterised as a mere blowing of trumpets for injured dignity, if it be not altogether a blast of wrath against an outrage to humanity.

To return to the affairs of Hispaniola. Columbus had now settled the Roldan revolt and other smaller ones; he had now, too, reduced the Indians into subjection; the mines were prospering; the Indians were to be brought together in populous villages, that so they might better be taught the Christian Faith, and serve as vassals to the crown of Castille; the royal revenues (always a matter of much concern to Columbus) would, he thought, in three years amount to sixty millions of reals; and now there was time for him to sit down, and meditate upon the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, or the conversion of Cathay.<sup>1</sup> If there had been any prolonged quiet for him, such great adventures would probably have begun to form the staple of his high thoughts. But he had hardly enjoyed more than a month of repose, when that evil came down upon him, which "poured the juice of aloes into the remaining portion of his life."<sup>2</sup>

The Catholic Sovereigns had hitherto, upon the whole, behaved well to Columbus. He had bitter enemies at

<sup>1</sup> "David left by his will 3000 quintals of Indian gold to Solomon to help build the Temple, and, according to Josephus, it came from these countries. Jerusalem and Mount Sion are to be rebuilt by the hands of Christians as God has declared by the mouth of the Prophet in the fourteenth Psalm. The Abbot Joaquin said that he who was to do this was to come from Spain; St Jerome showed the holy woman the way to do it. The Emperor of Cathay, some time since, sent for learned men to teach him the faith of Christ. Who will offer himself for this work? If our Lord brings me back to Spain, I pledge myself, in the name of God, to carry any one thither safely."—NAVARRETE, *Col. de Viages*, i, p. 309. [The foregoing is an extract from a letter written by Columbus in 1503 to Ferdinand and Isabella, and describing his fourth voyage. It is therefore some years later than the events under consideration in the text.]

<sup>2</sup> MUÑOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. 6, cap. 57.

These are the last printed words of MUÑOZ's *History*: and they are somewhat ominous of the fate of the excellent historian himself. There is more in manuscript of his *History*, which surely some lover of literature amongst the Spaniards will yet cause to be given to the world.

court. People were for ever suggesting to the monarchs that this foreigner was doing wrong. The Admiral's son Ferdinand gives a vivid picture of some of the complaints preferred against his father. He says, "When I was at Granada, at the time the most serene prince Don Miguel died, more than fifty of them (Spaniards who had returned from the Indies), as men without shame, bought a great quantity of grapes, and sat themselves down in the court of the Alhambra, uttering loud cries, saying, that their Highnesses and the Admiral made them live in this poor fashion on account of the bad pay they received, with many other dishonest and unseemly things, which they kept repeating. Such was their effrontery, that when the Catholic King came forth they all surrounded him, and got him into the midst of them, saying, 'Pay! Pay!' and if by chance I and my brother, who were pages to the most serene Queen, happened to pass where they were, they shouted to the very heavens, saying, 'Look at the sons of the Admiral of Mosquito-land, of that man who has discovered the lands of deceit and disappointment, a place of sepulchre and wretchedness to Spanish hidalgos': adding many other insulting expressions, on which account we excused ourselves from passing by them."<sup>1</sup>

Unjust clamour, like the above, would not, alone, have turned the hearts of the Catholic Sovereigns against Columbus; but this clamour was supported by serious grounds for dissatisfaction in the state and prospects of the colony: and when there is a constant stream of enmity and prejudice against a man, his conduct or his fortune, will some day give good way for it to rush in upon him. However this may be, soon after the return of the five vessels from St. Domingo, mentioned above, which first told the news of revolt of Roldan, Ferdinand and Isabella appear to have taken into serious consideration the question of suspending Columbus. He had, himself, in the letters transmitted by these ships requested that some one might be sent to conduct the affairs of justice in the colony; but if Ferdinand and Isabella began

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. del Almirante*, BARCIA, cap. 85.

by merely looking out for such an officer, they ended in resolving to send one who should take the civil as well as judicial authority into his hands. This determination was not, however, acted upon hastily. On the 21st of March 1499, they authorized Francis de Bobadilla "to ascertain what persons have raised themselves against justice in the island of Hispaniola, and to proceed against them according to law."<sup>1</sup> On the 21st of May 1499, they conferred upon this officer the government, and signed an order that all arms and fortresses in the Indies should be given up to him.<sup>2</sup> On the 26th of the same month, they give him the following remarkable letter to Columbus :—

*"Don Christopher Columbus, our Admiral of the Ocean : We have commanded the Comendador Francis de Bobadilla, the bearer of this, that he speak to you on our part some things which he will tell you : we pray you give him faith and credence, and act accordingly."*<sup>3</sup>

"I THE KING, I THE QUEEN.

*"By their command.*

"MIGUEL PEREZ DE ALMAZAN."

Bobadilla, however, was not sent from Spain until the beginning of July 1500, and did not make his appearance in Hispaniola till the 23rd of August of the same year. Their Highnesses, therefore, must have taken time before carrying their resolve into execution : and what they meant by it is dubious. Certainly not that the matter should have been transacted in the coarse way which Bobadilla adopted. It is a great pity, and a sad instance of mistaken judgment, that they fixed upon him for their agent. I imagine him to have been such a man as may often be met with, who, from his narrowness of mind and distinctness of prejudice, is supposed to be high-principled and direct in his dealings ; and whose untried reputation has great favour with

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* No. 128-29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* No. 130.

many people: until placed in power some day, he shows that to rule well requires other things than one-sidedness in the ruling person; and is fortunate if he does not acquire that part of renown which consists in notoriety, by committing some colossal blunder, henceforth historical from its largeness.

The first thing that Bobadilla did on arriving at St. Domingo was to take possession of the Admiral's house (he being at the fort La Concepción), and then to summon the Admiral before him, sending him the royal letter. Neither the Admiral nor his brothers attempted to make any resistance; and Bobadilla, with a stupid brutality, which, I suppose, he took for vigour, put them into chains, and sent them to Spain.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that the Castilian population of Hispaniola were rejoiced at Bobadilla's coming, and that they abetted him in all his violence. Accusations came thickly against Columbus: "the stones rose up against him and his brothers," says the historian Herrera, emphatically. The people told how he had made them work, even sick men, at his fortresses, at his house, at the mills, and other buildings; how he had starved them; how he had condemned men to be whipped for the slightest causes, as, for instance, for stealing a peck of wheat when they were dying of hunger. Considering the difficulties he had to deal with, and the scarcity of provisions, many of these accusations, if rightly examined, would probably have not merely failed in producing anything against Columbus but would have developed some proofs of his firmness and sagacity as a governor. Then his accusers went on to other grounds, such as his not having baptized Indians "because he desired slaves rather than Christians": moreover, that he had entered into war unjustly with the Indians, and that he had made many slaves, in order to

<sup>1</sup> [Bobadilla arrived at San Domingo on 23rd August 1500, and neither Christopher nor his brother Bartholomew was then in the town. The youngest brother, Don Diego, was in command, and hesitated to recognise Bobadilla's authority before communicating with the Admiral. Bobadilla refused to wait, seized the fort—liberating some condemned mutineers—and put Don Diego in irons. As soon as the Admiral and Bartholomew Columbus approached the town, they were treated in the same way.]

send them to Castille. It is highly unlikely that these latter charges were preferred by a single colonist, unless, perhaps, by some man in religious orders. The probability is, that they came from the other side of the water; and this does give considerable strength to the report, that the displeasure of the court with respect to the Admiral's proceedings against the Indians had to do with his removal from the government of the Indies. If so, it speaks largely for the continued admirable intentions of the Spanish Court in this matter.<sup>1</sup>

Poor Columbus! His chains lay very heavily upon him. He insisted, however, upon not having them taken off, unless by royal command, and would ever keep them by him ("I always saw them in his room," says his son Ferdinand), ordering that they should be buried with

<sup>1</sup> [There is another possible cause of the action of the Catholic Kings. Ferdinand was acknowledged to be the most faithless, the trickiest, and, therefore, the most skilful politician of his time; Isabella, if more honest, was a woman of her century and generation, and was hardly the guileless, frank-hearted lady chivalrously depicted by Sir Arthur Helps. As the reports of further discoveries came in, it became more and more obvious that the rights—almost sovereign rights—granted to Columbus and his descendants could not be continued if the colonies were to remain dependencies of the Spanish crown. It may be said that from this date Ferdinand and his successors endeavoured systematically to minimise the effect of the capitulations, and litigation between the Columbus family and the crown went on for nearly a century. In 1510 the Admiral's son, Diego Columbus, claimed the position of Viceroy of the Indies, "discovered and to be discovered"; in 1511 the Royal Council acknowledged his right to be Viceroy "in the islands discovered by his father," and this illustrates the continual claims of the family, and the continual limitations attempted by the crown. On one occasion Ferdinand told Diego frankly, when the latter pleaded for his rights, "I would do it for you, but I fear what your descendants might do."

Perhaps there was also another reason. In September 1499 Vasco de Gama had returned from India with his ships loaded with spices and the treasures of the East. Columbus had promised an easier and a quicker route than that followed and attained by Portugal. But what a contrast in results! Portugal had succeeded, while the Spanish discoveries were only a source of expense, yielding neither treasure nor commerce, and promising a plentiful crop of political and administrative difficulties in the future. Moreover, they were becoming fields of lawlessness which was a negation of organised government, and was of bad example for the mother country, not yet too firmly consolidated. Ferdinand and Isabella may well have thought that, both in the interests of the crown and the interests of the countries themselves, it was desirable to remove Columbus.]

him.<sup>1</sup> He did not know how many wretched beings would have to traverse those seas, in bonds much worse than his, with no room allowed to them for writing, as was his case,—not even for standing upright; nor did he foresee, I trust, that some of his doings would further all this coming misery. In these chains Columbus is of more interest to us than when in full power as Governor of the Indies; for so it is, that the most infelicitous times of a man's life are those which posterity will look to most, and love him most for. This very thought may have comforted him; but happily he had other sources of consolation in the pious aspirations which never deserted him.<sup>2</sup>

We have come now to the end of Columbus's administration of the Indies. Whatever we may think of his general policy, we cannot but regret his removal at the present time, when there appeared some chance of solidity in his government: though we must honestly admit, that the Catholic sovereigns, with such evidence as they had before them, were far from wrong in recalling him, had it been done in a manner worthy of his and of their greatness.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [This story rests solely on the authority of Fernando Columbus, and is considered, for several reasons, grossly improbable by Mr Harriette and others.]

<sup>2</sup> "Hope in him who created all men sustains me; his succour was always very speedy. At another time, and not long ago, when I was lower still, he raised me with his divine arm, saying, 'O man of little faith, arise, it is I, be not afraid.'"—NAVARETE, *Col.*, i, p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> [The policy Columbus desired to see carried out in Española may be gathered from a letter of his to the Catholic Kings, undated, but assigned to 1496-97, and brought to light since Sir Arthur Helps wrote this book. In the first place, he would encourage emigration and agriculture, and form three or four settlements in the island. No one should have leave to search for gold save those who settled permanently in these centres, and each settlement was to have a civil and ecclesiastical administration as in Castille. No one was to search for gold without a licence from the Governor of the island, or from the chief magistrate of his town, and was to be sworn to return to his home and faithfully register all the gold found once a month or once a week as ordered; one per cent. of all the gold obtained was to be deducted to build churches and support the clergy. And "because, on account of the thirst for gold, each one will seek more to occupy himself with that than with agriculture, it seems to me that for a certain time during the year licences to seek gold should not be granted, so that the necessary tillage may be carried out."—(*Cartas de Indias*, Madrid, 1877.)]



Little remains to be said about the government of Bobadilla. Ferdinand Columbus makes many dire complaints against this Governor, of his favouritism, covetousness, injustice, and mob service; but these accusations, coming from that quarter, must be received with caution. And, indeed, whatever fault Bobadilla might have had, there is good reason for thinking that he was quite free from anything like personal corruption.

One thing, however, he seems to have done, or permitted, which was most mischievous. Columbus placed a Cacique and his followers on certain lands, and then named certain Spaniards who were to receive the benefit from the tillage of these lands. We find also that he allowed Indians to be taken to work in the mines; but then an especial license was necessary, and it was given from such a month to such a month.<sup>1</sup> This, however, was a considerable extension of the *repartimiento*, and a very evil one for the poor Indians. But Bobadilla seems, if we may trust Charlevoix, to have gone further, and to have allowed the Spaniards to treat their Indians as a labour gang, to be taken to work anywhere and without any restriction.<sup>2</sup> He also, according to the same authority, numbered the inhabitants of the island, and made a distribution of them.

It is very difficult to lay down correct limits and periods for the various extensions of the *repartimiento* as defined by law, still more of what it was made by custom; and we may therefore be wronging Bobadilla in attributing this last extension to him: but we have accounts of the general course of his proceedings, which represent him, like the unjust steward in the Scriptures, though not upon

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiii, p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> "He compelled the Caciques to supply each Spaniard with a certain number of their subjects who were used by their owner just as he used his beasts of burden. To prevent these unfortunates escaping from the yoke imposed upon them, he commenced a census of the islanders, divided them into classes, and then distributed them in a larger or smaller number according to his wish to favour any particular Spaniard. In this way, the natives found themselves reduced to the hardest slavery that ever existed." — CHARLEVOIX, *Hist. de S. Domingue*, lib. 3, p. 205.

[Another act of Bobadilla's was to lower the crown royalty on gold found from a fifth to an eleventh. He could have known very little of Ferdinand !]

~~the~~ same motives, bidding the Spaniards under his dominion make as much haste as they could to profit by their present advantages; and making friends for himself by easy treatment of his master's debtors.

His government did not last much more than a year and a half. He was removed in consequence of the just remonstrances of Columbus; and the government was given on the 3rd of September 1501, to Nicholas de Ovando, a distinguished knight of the order of Alcantara.





# BOOK III

## OVANDO

### CHAPTER I

WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS TO OVANDO—SINGULAR INTERVIEW  
BETWEEN FERDINAND AND ISABELLA AND THE NEW  
GOVERNOR—STATE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF SPAIN—  
OVANDO'S ARRIVAL AT ST. DOMINGO—REVOLT OF HIGUEY  
—ULTIMATE FORM OF REPARTIMIENTO

IN considering history, nothing is more curious to reflect upon than the fortuitous way, as it seems to us, in which the particular actors present themselves for notice. These Indians, for instance, who have been mentioned in the course of this narrative, will always have a certain place in history; and how strange it is to find them there! For centuries, many such as Guacanagari, and many such as Caonabó, had shot off their puny arrows, smoked their long pipes, and gone down to the shades of their forefathers, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung,"—at least by Europeans: when, suddenly, amongst the listless threads of Indian affairs is plied the busy shuttle of European enterprize, till they come out woven into something like historical tapestry; and the relationships and alliances of petty Caciques become part of a story which, if it be moderately well told, the world would always listen to.

Now, if we mortals had the making of historical events, we should, I suppose, choose to have the game played by the greatest personages of each successive era; but how much more interesting it is, after all, that history should embrace almost every variety of human character as well as of worldly circumstance. There is no class or

kind of person, for example, to whom supreme power has not been entrusted. The real king, the good sort of man, the utter sensualist, the mere soldier, the intriguer, the idiot, the madman, have all been crowned: nor, in our own times, have we been without instances of most unlikely persons being suddenly called to supreme power, to see what they could make of it.

In the present narrative nothing can be more abrupt than the change from Columbus to the two governors who succeeded him: both of them knights of a religious order, with a certain narrow way of looking at things, incident to their profession, and with no especial culture that we know of; while he was of various accomplishments, large-minded, enthusiastic, fluent, affectionate, inventive.

In choosing Ovando, however, Ferdinand and Isabella seem to have taken great pains to provide a worthy governor for the Indies. He was well known to them, having been chosen by the Queen as one of the companions for her eldest son, Prince John.<sup>1</sup> With regard to Ovando's personal appearance, we are told, that he was of moderate stature, and had a vermilion-coloured beard, which fact hardly conveys much to our minds, but it is added in general terms, that his presence expressed authority. With respect to his mental qualifications, we learn that he was a friend to justice, an honourable person both in words and deeds, and that he held all avarice and covetousness in much aversion. He was humble too, they say; and when he was appointed Comendador Mayor of the order of Alcantara, he would never allow himself to be addressed by the title of "Lordship," which belonged to that office.<sup>2</sup>

Previous to Ovando's departure from court, the Monarchs

<sup>1</sup> "The Comendador Mayor was an old servant of the Catholic Queen, as well as of the King, and, as a virtuous and accomplished gentleman, had been placed among the principal gentlemen the Catholic kings chose throughout their kingdoms to attend the Prince Don John, their eldest son and heir."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 4, cap. 1.

<sup>2</sup> [The date of Ovando's appointment is 3rd September 1501, to be Governor with civil and criminal jurisdiction. On 26th September, a Cédula gave him permission to wear silk, brocade, precious stones, etc., notwithstanding the regulations of his order.]

were particular in giving him instructions both verbal and written. Among these instructions was one which Isabella especially insisted on: namely, "that all the Indians in Hispaniola should be free from servitude and be unmolested by any one, and that they should live as free vassals, governed and protected by justice; as were the vassals of Castille."<sup>1</sup> Like the vassals in Spain, the Indians were to pay tribute; they were also to assist in getting gold, but for this they were to be paid daily wages. Other commands were given at the same time for the conversion of the Indians, and to insure their being treated kindly.<sup>2</sup>

Respecting the general government of the country, it was arranged that on Ovando's going out, all those who received pay from the government in the Indies, as well those who had accompanied Bobadilla as those who had come out originally with Columbus, should return to Spain, and a new set to replace them should go out with Ovando. This was done because the major part of these soldiers and officials had necessarily been connected with the late troubles in the Colony, and it would be a good plan to start afresh, as it were. At the same time it was provided that no Jews, Moors, or new converts were to go to the Indies, or be permitted to remain there; but negro slaves "born in the power of Christians, were to be allowed to pass to the Indies, and the officers of the royal revenue were to receive the money to be paid for their permits."<sup>3</sup> This is the first notice about negroes going to the Indies. These instructions were given in the year 1501.

On Ovando's arrival in the colony, Bobadilla was to undergo the ordeal of a "*residencia*,"<sup>4</sup> a kind of examina-

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 4, cap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> ["The Indians should be treated with much love and kindness, so that no wrongs done to them should hinder their reception of our holy Faith by creating an abhorrence of the Christians . . . that he should take care that natives and Spaniards lived in peace, administering justice with an equal hand, since this will be the best way to ensure that no violence is done to the Indians."—*Col. de Doc. . . . del Arch. de Indias*, xxx, p. 13.]

<sup>3</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 4, cap. 12.

<sup>4</sup> "*Residencia*. The examination made by one judge of another, or of a person holding a public charge, into his conduct during the time he

tion well known and constantly practised in Spain, to which authorities were subject on going out of office—a sort of general impeachment. It is satisfactory to find, that amongst the orders given to Ovando, there are some for the restitution of the Admiral's property, and the maintenance of his mercantile rights.

Just before Ovando took leave of the King, he received a formal lecture upon the duties of a governor. The King, the Queen, and a Privy Councillor, Antonio de Fonseca, were the persons present; and, as I imagine, the latter addressed Ovando on the part of their Highnesses.<sup>1</sup> As it is not often that we have an opportunity of hearing a didactic lecture on the modes and duties of government given in the presence of a great master of that art, and probably looked over, if not prepared, by him, we must enter the royal cabinet, and hear some part of this discourse.

The first point which Fonseca impresses upon Ovando is, that before all things, he is to look to what concerns the reverence of God and His worship. Then he is to examine into the life and capacity of the men about him, and to put good men into office; taking care, however, not to leave all the authority in the hands of subordinates (*here we may well imagine Ferdinand nodded approvingly*), to the diminution of his own power, “nor to make them so great that they shall have occasion to contrive novelties,” in order to make themselves greater. Also, let there be change of authorities, so that many may have a share of profit and honour, and be made skilful in affairs.

That he should use moderation in making *repartimientos* and tributes, not overtaxing the people, which moderation would be furthered by his taking care that his personal and his household expenses were within due bounds.

had been in office.”—*Diccionario de la Leng. Cast. por la Acad. Española*. Paris, 1824.

[The *Residencias* were prolific in false accusations, unless accusers were bribed, and were therefore more terrible to honest officials than to the dishonest who were prepared to purchase immunity. Moreover, a *Residencia* might drag on for twenty years. See also Vol. iii, book xiv, cap. 3.]

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 4, cap. 13.



*(Here, I fancy, the Monarchs looked at each other, thought of their own frugal way of living, and Isabella smiled.)*

That he should not make himself judge in a cause, but let culprits be tried in the ordinary way. Thus he will avoid unpopularity, for "the remembrance of the crime perishes: not so that of the punishment." *(This aphorism must, I think, have been composed by Ferdinand himself. His writing is always exceedingly concise and to the purpose.)*

That he should not listen to tale-bearers (*parleros*) either of his own household or to those out of it; nor take vengeance upon anybody who had spoken ill of him, it being "an ugly thing to believe that anybody could speak ill of one who did ill to no one, but good to all." That it is one of the conditions of bad governors, "moved therein by their own consciences" to give heed to what they hear is said of them, and to take ill that, which if it had been said, they had better not have heard. Rather let injurious sayings be overcome by magnanimity.

That it would be good for him to give free audience to all, and to hear what they had to say: and if their counsel turned out ill, not to look coldly upon them for that. The same in war, or in any other undertaking: his agents must not have to fear punishment for failure, nor calumny for success: "for there were many persons who, to avoid the envy of their superiors, sought rather to lose a victory than to gain it." *(Here Ferdinand ought to have looked a little ashamed, being conscious that his own practice by no means came up to what he perceives to be noble and wise policy in the matter.)*

That he (Ovando) should look to what example he gives both in word and deed, governors living, as in a theatre, in the midst of the world. If he does ill, even those who follow him in that, will not the less disesteem him.

That although it is necessary for him to know the life of every one, yet he must not be over-inquisitive about it, nor rout up offences which are not brought before him officially. "Since if all offences were looked into, few men, or none, would be without punishment." Besides, for secret faults men may correct themselves: if these faults are made known, and especially if they are punished in excess, shame is lost, and men give way to their bad impulses.

That he is to encourage those who work, and to discourage the idle, as the Universal Father does.

That, as regards liberality, he should so conduct himself, that men should not dare to ask him for things which they would know he must deny: this would be a great restraint upon them, and a great proof of good reputation in a governor.

That, in fine, all that had been said consisted in this, that he was to govern as he would be governed: and that "it behoved him to be intent in business, to show courage in difficulties and management in all things, brevity in executing useful determinations, yet not as if carried away by passion, but always upon good counsel; considering much what a charge was upon him, for this thought would be useful to him at all times: and above all things he was to take heed (in order that the same might not happen to him which happened to the Admiral)<sup>1</sup> that when any occasion for dealing briefly with an offence occurred, he should have swift recourse to punishment, for in such cases the remedy ought to be like a thunderbolt."<sup>2</sup>

After reading the above, we cannot say that the Catholic Monarchs were inattentive to the government of their Indian possessions, nor can the sagacity which directed that attention be for a moment questioned. Indeed, that sagacity is so remarkable, that it may naturally occur to the learned reader to inquire, whether Machiavelli's *Prince* had yet been published, and whether King Ferdinand could have read that much-abused manual of crafty statesmen. It was, however, about twelve years after this memorable audience granted by Ferdinand and Isabella to Ovando that *The Prince* is alluded to by Machiavelli, and described as a small unpublished work.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This passage is remarkable, as it shows the King supposed the Admiral to fail as a governor from indecisiveness, a very different thing from severity, and yet not inconsistent with it. The position of Columbus as a foreigner may account for this want of decision, if the King was right in attributing it to him.

<sup>2</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 4, cap. 13.

<sup>3</sup> See MACHIAVELLI'S letter to Vittori.—"I discussed with Philip the new work of mine (*Il Principe*), whether I should do well to give it to him or not, and, supposing it to be well to give it to him, whether I should take it or send it to you."

But, to return to the new Governor of Hispaniola: it is recorded by Herrera and Las Casas that the Catholic Sovereigns assigned a duration of two years to his government; and Charlevoix, in his History of St. Domingo, says that it was their intention at the end of those two years, to reinstate the Admiral. I do not give credit to this; and in the document appointing Ovando, the words are, that he is to be governor as long as it is their Highnesses' will and pleasure. There is a restriction upon him, but it is one that regards the extent of his government, and not the duration of it. It is declared that his authority should not extend to the "islands" where Alonso de Ojeda and Vicente Yañez Pinzon were governing.<sup>1</sup> I have not, hitherto, made mention of these two discoverers, nor, indeed, of any others besides the Admiral; being desirous to keep, if possible, to the main current of the history of the New World. If we suffer ourselves to be diverted from that, we shall get into some such perplexity as we should, if we were navigating without chart in the midst of those West Indian seas thick with shoals and islets. Where the proceedings in respect of any one island will not give an adequate view of the general policy, recourse must be had to the history of other islands; but, for the present, we follow the fate of the island first settled, and which may be considered as the seat of government in the West Indies, Hispaniola.

At the same time it must not be forgotten that American discovery was at this time spreading out in several directions. Their Highnesses had already made terms with many adventurers whom the wondrous products brought home from the Indies, and the renown that men had gained there, tempted irresistibly to further daring.

On the 13th of February 1502, Nicholas de Ovando left the port of San Lucar to take possession of his new government, having under him a gallant company of two thousand five hundred persons, a large proportion of them

<sup>1</sup> See the "Título de Gobernador de las Indias á Frey Nicolas de Ovando, Comendador de Lares, en la Orden y Caballeria de Alcántara, exceptuando las Gobernaciones de Alonso de Hojeda y Vicente Yañez Pinzon. (Registrado en el Sello de Corte en Simancas.)"—NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 138.

being Hidalgos.<sup>1</sup> He met with a terrible storm on his way, and had some difficulty in reaching St. Domingo at all. Before entering upon the affairs of his government, it will be desirable to consider the critical state and prospects of the royal family of Spain, which materially affect this narrative, and which, I have no doubt, were subjects often and eagerly discussed on the voyage by the Spaniards in this expedition.

Death had made many a sad inroad into the home of Ferdinand and Isabella. They had lost their only son, Prince John, in 1497. Of their four daughters, Isabel had married the heir of the Portuguese throne, and, after his death without children, the next heir. She died in giving birth to a son: and the child died soon afterwards. Juana, the second daughter, was married to the Archduke Philip, son of Maximilian the Emperor, and had two sons, Charles, afterwards Charles the Fifth, and Ferdinand, afterwards King of the Romans. Catherine of Aragon, another daughter, was married, as is well known, into the royal family of England. Then there was Maria, who married the widower of her sister Isabel.

Juana was now the heiress, and she was *Juana la Loca*—Juana the insane. Her husband, Philip, had lately visited Spain; but wearied of the Spaniards, and probably not less so of his doting and imbecile wife, he had set off again for Flanders. Doubtless all these domestic troubles had saddened the heart and injured the health of Isabella; and the affairs of the New World were soon to lose the light of her loving countenance upon them. As long, however, as there was any spark of life in her, she was not wanting in good thoughts and good endeavours for her new subjects.

It must be remembered, while discussing the affairs of the royal family of Spain, that the kingdom of Castille was essentially separate from that of Aragon, and that, on Isabella's death, Castille, and with it the Indies, must go to the helpless Juana and therefore to her husband;—not

<sup>1</sup> [There was an attempt to obtain and send out emigrants of the agricultural class really needed. Allotments of land, free passage, and a supply of the necessary stores and implements, were offered, but unsuccessfully, only a smaller number than that asked for volunteering to sail.]

to the politic Ferdinand, into whose capacity for government we have just had some insight from the foregoing address to Ovando. On every account, then, the state of the royal family was a matter of moment to the Indies.

We may also mention at this time, though it is not necessarily connected with our subject, that Columbus was received very graciously by their Highnesses; was promised to be reinstated in his rights; and was about to commence his fourth and last voyage of discovery. He was not, however, to be allowed to land at St. Domingo, for reasons which are obvious.

Nicholas de Ovando arrived at St. Domingo on the 15th of April 1502. Las Casas, now in his 28th year, came out in the same fleet; and he mentions, that as the vessels neared the shore, the Spanish colonists ran down to hear the news from home, and to tell their good news exultingly in return, which was, that an extraordinary lump of gold had been found, and that certain Indians were in revolt. "I heard it myself," the historian says; and he is right to chronicle the fact, showing as it does the views which prevailed among the settlers, of the advantage of an Indian revolt in furnishing slaves. This great piece of gold which they talked about, had been found accidentally by an Indian woman at the mines, while listlessly moving her rake to and fro in the water one day during dinner time. Its value was estimated at 1,350,000 maravedis,<sup>1</sup> and in the festivities that took place on the occasion, was used as a dish for a roast pig, the miners saying that no king of Castille had ever feasted from a dish of such value. We do not find that the poor Indian woman had any part in the good fortune: Indeed, as Las Casas observes, she was fortunate if she had any portion of the meat, not to speak of the dish.

Amidst the clamour of such welcome, the new Governor landed, was duly received by the authorities, and commenced the affairs of the government. He announced the *residencia* of Bobadilla, and placed Roldan under arrest. The people he had brought with him rushed off to the mines, knowing nothing of the nature of the work,

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to about 416*l*.

nor of their capacity for enduring it. Their provisions failed them; fevers seized them; and, in a short time, more than a thousand of Ovando's two thousand five hundred had perished in a wretched manner. The only persons who had food to traffic with were the three hundred Castillians, old residents as we may call them, and as they had scarcely any clothes, such of the newcomers as had clothes, or tools, were enabled to get food for a time. It could not be expected, however, that the food provided by three hundred improvident people would go far amongst two thousand five hundred.

Here it may be noticed that in general those colonists who devoted themselves to mining remained poor, while the farmers grew rich. When melting-time came, which was at stated intervals of eight months, it often happened that, after the King's dues were paid, and those who had claims upon the produce for advances already made to the miners were satisfied, nothing remained for the miner himself. And so all this blood and toil were not paid for even in money: and many still continued to eat their meals from the same wooden platters they had been accustomed to in the old country, only with discontented minds, and souls beginning to be embroiled by cruelty.

While Ovando was doing what he could in the troubles that met him at the outset of his administration, Columbus suddenly appeared again upon the scene<sup>1</sup>—a presence thoroughly unwelcome no doubt to the new Governor. One of Columbus's vessels wanted refitting, and he wished to change her for another in the fleet; moreover, as he informed Ovando, he desired to enter the port of St. Domingo, because he foresaw that a hurricane was coming on. The landsman Ovando perceived nothing of the kind; and was only anxious to get Columbus away as soon as he could, and thus to obey the orders received from their Highnesses, which were, that Columbus should not land at St. Domingo. Besides, Bobadilla had not yet taken his departure, Roldan and his faction were still in the island, so there was no knowing what tumult might arise, if Columbus were permitted to disembark. In fine, Ovando stood upon the orders he had received, and very

<sup>1</sup> [On 29th June 1502.]

wisely, as it appears to me, with his disbelief in the Admiral's scientific foresight, refused to allow Columbus to enter the harbour. That Ovando put no faith in the great navigator's prophecy about the coming hurricane, is manifest, because the Governor sent away at that moment the return fleet to Spain. Columbus made as quickly as he could for some safe anchorage. The hurricane did come on, and raged furiously. The greater part of the return fleet sank. Bobadilla perished, Roldan perished; and with them, doubtless, many of the less notorious enemies of Columbus, who thus was signally avenged by the disaster which his skill would have averted. Amongst the few vessels that escaped was a lumbering one, the worst in the fleet, it is said, which was taking back the goods of Columbus to Spain. The men of that day saw in this the especial hand of Providence.

The same hurricane did great damage to the town of St. Domingo, and the Governor took occasion to change the site of the town to the other side of the river, where it now stands. About this time, too, he bestirred himself in founding settlements. The first that he resolved to found was on the north of the island, at the Puerto de Plata, one of his reasons for founding a settlement there being the great multitude of Indians in that part:<sup>1</sup> so that, at any rate, at that time, Hispaniola was not depopulated. The expedition, in its way to Puerto de Plata, had occasion to touch at, or near, the island of Saona, the very spot which the colonists alluded to, when coming down to the shore to welcome the Governor, they had joyfully exclaimed that the Indians were in revolt. The cause of this outbreak must now be told. Between the inhabitants of the little island of Saona and the Spaniards there had originally been much friendship. These Indians had been in the habit of supplying their new friends with bread; and on one occasion lately, a Spanish party had been sent to the island to get bread there. The Cacique of the place, with a stick in his hand, was urging his men, and hastening the preparations. The Spaniards were

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 5, cap. 4. See also Columbus's letter to the Pope, anno 1502.

looking on: one of them had his dog with him, and the animal was wild to get at the Cacique. The Spaniard could hardly hold it in; and, unfortunately, happened to remark to a comrade standing by him, "what a thing it would be, if we were to set the dog at him." His friend in jest said, "at him" (*tomalo*), thinking that the Spaniard could certainly restrain the dog. But, with this encouragement, it burst from its master, rushed on the Cacique, and killed him in a manner hideous to think of. The adjacent province rose in arms; and it was no wonder therefore that when the mariners, whom Ovando sent to found his new colony of Puerto de Plata, touched at a spot near to that where the above transaction took place, the natives should have considered them as invaders, and have attacked them accordingly. In the conflict that ensued nine Spaniards were killed, and the news of their slaughter being brought to the Governor, he ordered war to be declared,—war, according to the phrase of the time, "of fire and blood." From all the Spanish citadels forces were sent under various captains, and a certain Juan de Esquivel was named Captain-general of the force, which amounted to four hundred men. On the arrival of this body in Higüey, the province of Hispaniola adjacent to the island of Saona, and which had been concerned in the original revolt, the Indians seem to have behaved with sufficient bravery; but finding that their naked bodies and childish weapons could in no way contend with well-clad, well-armed men, they soon abandoned open fighting, and fled to the forests. From a war it degenerated into a hunt. Many of the Indians who were taken had both their hands cut off, and were told by the Spaniards to carry those letters to their lords, meaning that they should show what mutilation they had suffered, in order that it might inspire general terror. Nor was it only by twos or threes that they suffered: on one occasion six or seven hundred prisoners were put to the sword at once. Harassed in every way, the poor Indians at last sought to make terms; and it was agreed that, as a condition of peace, they should construct in their territory a great manufactory of casabi bread for the Spaniards. They were not, however, to be required to come with the



bread to St. Domingo, which service they were very glad to avoid.

Amongst the chiefs who came to do reverence to the Captain-general was Cotubano, the principal Cacique of those parts. He was a man of great bodily strength and courage, and was in such esteem that the Captain-general did not think it derogatory to exchange names with him. This practice of exchanging names, meant for a sign of perpetual love and amity, was an Indian custom.<sup>1</sup> The persons so exchanging names were called "Guatiasos"; and I imagine the relationship was considered in somewhat of the same light as that of foster brethren amongst the Irish. It shows a degree of refinement which we might not have expected; but it is not, perhaps, in the affections that civilization finds the most to change and to develop.

The war with the inhabitants of Higüey was thus successfully brought to a close; welcome news for Ovando, in whose favour it may be noted, that he is said to have given such instructions to the Captain-general as showed that he wished for peace; though peace was only arrived at through such fearful cruelties.

The Governor's greatest difficulty, at this period of his administration, was to know how to provide for the wants of the Castilian population; and this difficulty would have been felt still more urgently but for the great mortality above mentioned, and the return of many men in those vessels which were sent back to Spain in the fleet that perished. The stores which Ovando had brought with him from Spain were soon exhausted; and the Spaniards began to suffer greatly from hunger. They were compelled to eat all manner of uncleanly things. The Indians also suffered from this famine, for they had not put in the usual crops (their suicidal mode, as we have seen before, of getting rid of their Spanish visitors); and it is stated that in consequence of the famine, new diseases made

<sup>1</sup> "This exchange of names . . . they hold as close relationship and a league of perpetual friendship and union. And so the Captain-General and this chief became Guatiasos, as perpetual friends and brothers-in-arms, and the Indians called the Captain-General, Cotubano, and the chief, Juan de Esquivel."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 47.

their appearance both amongst the native population and the Spaniards.

Another great difficulty for the Governor was, that the Indians would have little or no communication with the Christians. Ovando stated that this aversion of the Indians was the result of the declaration of their freedom. But Las Casas, with more probability, asserts that the Indians never knew anything about their freedom having been declared; and that they shunned the Spaniards as naturally as "sparrows the sparrow-hawk." It is easy to see that this conduct of the Indians would appear to present a great hindrance to their conversion, a circumstance which Ovando did not omit to mention to Ferdinand and Isabella when he laid the matter before them. He probably took care also to point out the difficulty of procuring gold, or making prosperous settlements, while the Indians thus stood apart.

The Catholic Sovereigns, in a reply dated the 20th December 1503, directed Ovando to compel the Indians to have dealings with the Spaniards, and to make them work for such wages as he should think fit. The Monarchs further ordered that the Indians should work under the guidance of their Caciques; that they should go and hear mass, and be instructed in the Faith; and further that they should do all these things "as free persons, for so they are."<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand and Isabella were great and very sagacious princes; but it was beyond their power and their wisdom to combine the execution of such orders with the maintenance of freedom for their Indians.<sup>2</sup> Ovando adopted the following system: he distributed Indians amongst the Castillians, giving to one man fifty, to another a hundred; with a deed that run thus, "To you, such a one, is given an *encomienda* of so many Indians

<sup>1</sup> ["Which is to be done and accomplished as free persons as they are and not as slaves."]

<sup>2</sup> [Besides the public instructions further secret ones, dated 29th March 1503, had been sent to Ovando (*Doc. Ined . . . de Antiguas Posesiones Españolas*, xxi, p. 174). All the articles related to the possibility of obtaining a larger revenue from Española. Practically, Ovando was to squeeze the Spaniards, and the Spaniards were to squeeze the natives; but it was all to be done humanely, and Ferdinand and Isabella were not to lose their reputation for greatness and sagacity.]

with such a Cacique, and you are to teach them the things of our holy Catholic Faith."<sup>1</sup> The word *encomienda*, which will now be more frequently used than *repartimiento*, was a term belonging to the military orders, corresponding to our word, commandery or perceptory; and this term naturally enough came into use with the appointment, as governors in the Indies, of men who held authority in those orders, such as Bobadilla and Ovando. With respect to the implied condition of teaching the Indians the "holy Catholic Faith," it was no more attended to from the first than any formal clause in a deed, which is supposed by the parties concerned to be a mere formality; and, indeed, to be put in chiefly to gratify the lawyers.

We have now arrived at the climax of the *repartimiento* system. That which Bobadilla did illegally, was now done with proper formalities on parchment: and from henceforward many a dreary day will have to pass in the world's history, before the statesmen most impressed with humane and wise counsels will be able to reduce this gigantic evil in the least. We may notice again that the first *repartimientos* made by Columbus were very different in principle to the *encomiendas* of Ovando, though in practice the two things might ultimately have come to much the same result. Columbus apportioned to any Spaniard, whom he thought fit, such and such lands, to be worked by such a Cacique and his people—a very different procedure to giving *men*—a feudal system,<sup>2</sup> not a system of slavery.

Let no one say that the Indians were to be blamed for keeping away from the Spaniards, or that this aversion of theirs to join their invaders, showed any inaptness for civilization. Such arguments were of great force in those days, but cannot be accepted now. These Indians were sufficiently provided with the principal means of living, and even with some of the luxuries of life, before Columbus set foot in their island: and what did the so-called civilization of the Spaniards offer them? What peace,

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, *Hist. de la Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 5, cap. 11.

<sup>2</sup> "Consequently his companions in the enterprise had a right to a share of the plunder, and to establish themselves and their heirs as lords of the soil, reducing the natives to the condition of feudatories."—MUÑOZ, *Hist. del Nuevo Mundo*, lib. 6, cap. 50.

what love, what beauty or holiness of life, did they see amongst the Spaniards, that should have tempted any sane Indian to take up his abode amongst these new men—especially if his companionship was only to be some form of servitude? The civilized man did not then possess those “fire-waters” which are now so potent in attracting and clearing off the savages adjacent to the outskirts of civilization. The Indians possessed already what excitement or distraction can be obtained from intoxicating liquors—the produce of certain roots or fruits of their own—and were not obliged to go to the Spaniards for those dangerous allurements. The implements, dress, and toys of the new-comers may have had some attraction for the Indians, but surely not enough to conquer their reasonable distaste for Spanish bloodhounds. And as for any inducements which the Spanish religion held out to the Indians, we may judge how far these were understood, or estimated, by the story of Hatuey, Cacique of a part of Cuba, who had spies at Hispaniola to keep him informed of the proceedings of the Spaniards there. He was in apprehension that they would come, as they afterwards did, to his territory; so, calling his people together, and recounting the cruelties of the Spaniards, he said that they did all these things for a great lord whom they loved much, which lord he would now show them. Accordingly he produced a small basket filled with gold. “Here is the lord whom they serve, and after whom they go, and, as you have heard, already they are longing to pass over to this place, not pretending more than to seek this lord; wherefore, let us make to him here a festival and dances, so that when they come, he may tell them to do us no harm.”<sup>1</sup> The Indians approved this counsel, and danced round the gold, until they were exhausted, when the Cacique turned to them and said, that they should not keep the god of the Christians anywhere, for were it even in their entrails, it would be torn out, but that they should throw it in the river, that the Christians might not know where it was. “And so,” says the account, “they threw it.”

There is something so ironical in this story, that it

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 9, cap. 3.

almost seems as if it had been invented by some good Dominican in the Indies, as a satire on his parishioners; and it may have crept into history without good warrant. We shall not be wrong, however, in concluding that the inducements held out, either by the religion, or the polity, which the Spaniards exhibited in the Indies, were not such as to lead any Indian to give up his freedom willingly, and to come and live in fellowship with them and their dogs. An impartial observer would have thought much more slightly of the mental powers of the Indians if they had shown this willingness; and he would have pronounced those Indians the wisest who betook themselves at once to the remotest and most inaccessible parts of the island, or who, by war or artifice, strove most unremittingly to get rid of their invaders.

Before the Catholic Sovereigns had authorized Ovando to give *repartimientos* of the peaceful Indians of Hispaniola, these monarchs had issued an edict allowing the capture of Cannibals when rebels. In this edict are recounted the steps which had previously been taken on behalf of these Cannibals,—how it had been forbidden to capture them, how some that had been captured had been sent back; yet as they still persevered in their idolatrous and cannibal ways (*idolatrando y comiendo los dichos Indios*), and also persevered in attacking her peaceful Indian subjects, it was now declared by Isabella that if the Cannibals would not receive her Captains, and listen to them in order to be instructed in the Faith, and to be taken into her service and under her sway, they might be made captives.<sup>1</sup> As was to be expected, this permission led to great abuse.

<sup>1</sup> "If nevertheless the said Cannibals resist, and seek to avoid receiving and admitting into their territories the captains and people that are ordered to make the said voyages, and refuse to hear them, in order to be taught the principles of our holy Catholic Faith, and to come under my obedience and into my service; then it shall be lawful to take and capture them, bringing them from their own countries and islands to my kingdoms and provinces, or to whatsoever other parts and places may be fit, paying us the part that belongs to us, and they may then be sold and used without liability to any penalty, because bringing them to these parts and employing them in the service of Christians will more quickly convert them to our holy Catholic Faith."--NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, Appendice, No. 17.

## CHAPTER II

OVANDO'S MODE OF MANAGING THE SPANIARDS—HIS TYRANNY  
IN XARAGUA—BARBARITIES IN HIGUEY—DEATH OF QUEEN  
ISABELLA—CAPTURE OF THE LUCAYANS—DON DIEGO  
COLUMBUS APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF THE INDIES—  
CHARACTER OF OVANDO'S GOVERNMENT

**B**UT we must return to Hispaniola, where worse things than capturing Cannibals were about to take place. Before entering, however, upon that part of Ovando's administration, which it is impossible not to condemn, we must premise that in his government of the Spaniards he seems to have been exceedingly successful. He caused many towns to be built; he founded a hospital, dedicated to St. Nicholas, for the poor; he boldly resisted the King's ministers at home, when he thought they were acting prejudicially to the colony; he probably appointed, and certainly maintained in office, one of the best judges that ever was known in the Indies—one who sought, as a good citizen, to compose differences and abridge law proceedings, "avoiding the expense of paper and ink, which with other judges is wont to be more grievous and costly than the blood of those who have their heads broken"—doing these good works in the streets and public places as he went along.<sup>1</sup> The sterner duties of a governor were well fulfilled by Ovando himself, who fully acted up to King Ferdinand's advice, of coming down upon malefactors like a thunderbolt. If there were a turbulent person, one who seemed likely to act

<sup>1</sup> "Reconciling litigants, settling quarrels, minimising grievances, and hindering lawsuits as much as he could as he went along in the streets and market-places, avoiding the expense, etc."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 4, cap. 1. I am particular in noticing this good trait in Maldonado, as he was afterwards selected to fulfil one of the most difficult offices ever imposed upon a civil servant, and will appear again at a most critical point in the history.

the part of Roldan in the colony, Ovando would send for him on some fair pretext, just when there happened to be vessels returning to Spain. Then, inviting him to dinner, he would talk with him about his neighbours, and enquire on what terms they lived with each other. The unsuspecting colonist exulted in thinking that he was now in high favour with the Governor, and likely to have more Indians allotted to him: when suddenly Ovando would turn upon him with this question: "In which of those ships (probably visible from where they were sitting) would you like to go to Castille?" The contented look of a man who is expecting some benefit, changes to the terrified appearance of one who is about to be sent home ruined to his friends. He falteringly asks, "Why, my Lord?" The stern Comendador Mayor answers, "You have nothing else to do but to go." "But, my Lord, I have not the wherewithal, not even for my passage." "It shall be my care to provide for that," replies the Governor: and in this summary manner he was wont to ship off a dangerous person at once, and thus to clear the colony of a possible nuisance.<sup>1</sup>

Ovando's treatment of the Indians was equally swift, and immeasurably more severe. The greatest stain upon his administration is his conduct to Anacaona, the Queen of Xaragua. The reader will recollect how well this Indian Queen and her brother received the Admiral's brother, Don Bartolomé, on a former occasion. The Spaniards then affirmed her to be a wise woman, of good manners and pleasant address; and she is said to have earnestly entreated her brother to take warning by the fate of her husband Caonabó, and to love and obey the Christians. As she was now to play the hostess again, we may refer to the account of her former reception of a Spanish governor, the Adelantado, of which there are some details furnished by Peter Martyr.

After mentioning that the Queen and her brother received the Lieutenant with all courtesy and honour, he says "They brought our men to their common hall, into which they come together as often as they make any notable games or triumphs, as we have said before.

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 204.

Here, after many dancings, singings, maskings, runnings, wrestlings, and other trying of mastries, suddenly there appeared in a large plain near unto the hall, two great armies of men of war, which the King for his pastime had caused to be prepared, as the Spaniards use the play with reeds, which they call *Juga de Canias*. As the armies drew near together, they assailed the one the other as fiercely as if mortal enemies with their banners spread should fight for their goods, their lands, their lives, their liberty, their country, their wives and their children, so that within the moment of an hour, four men were slain, and many wounded. The battle also should have continued longer, if the King had not, at the request of our men, caused them to cease."<sup>1</sup>

At this time, in the year 1503, some of Roldan's former partizans were settled in the province of Xaragua, and were a great trouble to the colony. Herrera says, in a quiet sarcastic way, "they lived in the discipline they had learnt from Roldan"; and the governing powers of Xaragua found them "intolerable." He also adds that Anacaona's people were in policy, in language, and in other things superior to all the other inhabitants of the island.<sup>2</sup> As might be expected, there were constant disturbances between these Spaniards and the adjacent Indians; and the Spaniards took care to inform the Governor that their adversaries, the Indians of Xaragua, intended to rebel. Perhaps they did so intend. Ovando resolved, after much consultation, to take a journey to Xaragua. It must be said, in justice to Ovando, that this does not look as if he thought the matter were a light one. Xaragua was seventy leagues from St. Domingo. The Governor set out well accompanied, with 70 horsemen and 300 foot soldiers. Anacaona, who had probably some suspicion of his intentions, summoned all her feudatories around her "to do honour" to him, when she heard of his coming. She went out to meet Ovando with a concourse of her

<sup>1</sup> Dec. 1, lib. 6, Eden's translation.

<sup>2</sup> HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 6, cap. 4. Madrid, 1730.



subjects, and with the same festivities of singing and dancing as in former days she had adopted when she went to receive the Adelantado. Various pleasures and amusements were provided for the strangers, and probably, Anacaona thought that she had succeeded in soothing and pleasing this severe-looking Governor, as she had done the last. But the former followers of Roldan were about the Governor, telling him that there certainly was an insurrection at hand, that if he did not look to it now, and suppress it at once, the revolt would be far more difficult to quell when it did break out. Thus they argued, using all these seemingly wise arguments of wickedness which from time immemorial have originated and perpetuated treachery. Ovando listened to these men; indeed he must have been much inclined to believe them, or he would hardly have come all this way. He was now convinced that an insurrection was intended.

With these thoughts in his mind, he ordered that, on a certain Sunday, after dinner, all the cavalry should get to horse, on the pretext of a tournament. The infantry, too, he caused to be ready for action. He himself, a Tiberius in dissembling, went to play at quoits, and was disturbed by his men coming to him and begging him to look on at their sports. The poor Indian Queen hurried with the utmost simplicity into the snare prepared for her. She told the Governor that her Caciques, too, would like to see this tournament, upon which, with demonstrations of pleasure, he bade her come with all her Caciques to his quarters, for he wanted to talk to them, intimating, as I conjecture, that he would explain the festivity to them. Meanwhile, he gave his cavalry orders to surround the building; he placed the infantry at certain commanding positions; and told his men, that when, in talking with the Caciques, he should place his hand upon the badge<sup>1</sup> of knighthood which hung upon his breast, they should rush in and bind the Caciques and Anacaona. It fell out as he had planned. All these deluded Indian chiefs and their queen were secured. She alone was led

<sup>1</sup> "The insignia (order of Alcántara) was a God the Father on a white robe."—MARQUEZ, *Tesoro Militar de Cavalleria*, p. 24.

out of Ovando's quarters, which were then set fire to and all the chiefs burned alive. Anacaona was afterwards hanged, and the province was desolated.

Humanity does not gain much, after all, by this man's not taking the title of "Lordship," which he had a right to.

Finally, the Governor collected the former followers of Roldan in Xaragua, and formed a town of their settlement, which he named "the city of the true peace" (*La villa de la vera Paz*), but which a modern chronicler well says, might more properly have been named "Aceldama, the field of blood."<sup>1</sup> I observe that the arms assigned to this new settlement were a dove with the olive branch, a rainbow, and a cross.

The next occasion Ovando had to chastise the Indians was upon another outbreak in the province of Higüey—that province which had before been reduced to obedience by Juan de Esquivel. The Indians of this district had agreed to make bread for the Spaniards, but not to carry it to St. Domingo. This new condition was now endeavoured to be imposed upon them. Las Casas expresses his conviction, founded on experience, that the conduct of the little garrison which had been left in Higüey was disorderly and licentious, according to the usual custom of the invaders. The result was, that the Indians rose and attacked the fort, burnt it, and put to death the garrison, with the exception of one Spaniard who escaped to tell the news. The Governor instantly proclaimed war, and gave Juan de Esquivel the command. The war was carried on in the accustomed way, as regards the unavailing efforts of the Indians, and with more than the accustomed ferocity on the part of the conquering

<sup>1</sup> CAPTAIN SOUTHEY, *Hist. of the West Indies*, i, p. 93. [Ovando's exploit occurred in July 1503. In March of that year instructions had been sent out that "to obtain the salvation of the souls of the Indians they should be collected to live in villages . . . building a church in each village, with a chaplain to say mass and teach the Indians religion, and also to teach the children to read and write . . . establish hospitals for the poor, as well Christian as Indian, assigning lands to support them."—*Col. de Doc. Ined. relativos al . . . antiguas posesiones Españolas*, viii, p. xlix.]

Spaniards. There were some signal instances of valour shown by the Indians. On one occasion, when Las Casas was an eye-witness, a naked Indian, with only his bow and arrows, maintained, unhurt, a close contest with a well-armed Spaniard, to the admiration of both armies standing aloof to behold the engagement.<sup>1</sup> The Indians, however, found their chief safety in flight; and it is recorded that those whom the Spaniards compelled to act as guides, and whom they kept attached to them by ropes, often threw themselves off the precipices, and thus balked their masters. Unfortunately, amongst the Spaniards themselves, were men who had become very skilful in tracking Indians; so much so, that from the turn of a withered leaf, they could detect which way their prey had gone. The cruelty wreaked by the Spaniards upon their captives was excessive. They used the same mode of sending terror amongst the Indians which had been adopted in the former war; namely, cutting off the hands of their captives. Las Casas mentions that on one occasion they hanged up thirteen Indians "in honour and reverence of Christ our Lord and his twelve Apostles." These men, hanging at such a height that their feet could just touch the ground, were used as dumb figures for the Spaniards to try their swords upon. This hideous cruelty Las Casas says he saw, but at the same time he adds with a shrinking which all will feel to be natural, that he fears to relate these things now, hardly being able to persuade himself but that he must have dreamt them. On another occasion he saw some Indians being burnt alive in a sort of wooden cradle. Their cries disturbed the Spanish Captain taking his siesta in his tent; and he bade the Alguazil, who had the charge of the execution, to dispatch the captives. This officer, however, only gagged the poor wretches, who thus fulfilled their martyrdom in the way he originally intended for them. "All this I saw with my bodily mortal eyes,"<sup>2</sup> emphatically exclaims the witness for the fact.

<sup>1</sup> [An order of 17th September 1501 forbade the sale of arms to the Indians under very heavy penalties.]

<sup>2</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 96. ["Pure declamation" of Las Casas, says a modern Spanish writer. Another writes that if Ovando and his officers "applied to some of the natives of Española



And here I must say for Las Casas, that I have not the slightest doubt of the truth of any statement which he thus vouches for. He manifests, throughout, in various little things his accuracy and truthfulness. For instance, he is careful to point out the exact pronunciation of the Indian names. He shows a fair appreciation of those persons he is most bitterly opposed to: as, for example, he says of Ovando, that he was a man fit to govern, but not Indians—which is much the same conclusion that the modern reader will probably come to in reviewing the conduct of this Governor.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Spaniards, Cotubano, the chief Cacique of Higuey, the same who exchanged names with Juan de Esquivel, remained untaken; and the subjection of the province was therefore considered incomplete. This Cacique had retired to the little island of Saona, where he had his spies who watched for the approach of the Spaniards. One day these spies, two in number, were seized. One was put to death, the other made to serve as a guide. The Spaniards hurried off in different directions, each anxious to distinguish himself in the capture: at last one of them, Juan Lopez Labrador, came suddenly upon twelve Indians, marching in a line one after another. The Spaniard asked for Cotubano: the Indians said that he was the last of the line; and the poor frightened wretches made way for the Spaniard, who dealt a blow with his sword at the Cacique, which he received upon his hands that were thus rendered nearly useless. The other Indians fled, and the Spaniard seizing Cotubano by the throat, with the sword pointed to his body, was carrying him off captive, when the Cacique made a sudden spring on one side to avoid the sword; then,

the punishment of fire it was not a refinement of cruelty—it was the application of a punishment which was in use over all Europe.” That is true, and may explain if it does not excuse. But there was also a difference; the application of Roman fire in Europe was safeguarded by certain legal forms, however much or little their worth; the application in Española was at the discretion of any individual Spanish gaol-bird, and inflicted on natives to whom it was a new and objectless torture. The European grew up amid these theological arguments, and accepted them as among the possibilities of life or death.]

maimed as he was, rushed on Labrador, got him down, and was on the point of slaying him, when a party of Spaniards came to the rescue. They struck Cotubano down senseless, took up their almost lifeless comrade, and afterwards conveyed the Cacique to St. Domingo where he was hanged by order of the Governor.

Higuey was now considered to be at peace, and two settlements were made in it, called Salvaleon and Santa Cruz.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the news of Anacaona's punishment had reached Spain; and it may be imagined how wrathful Queen Isabella was on hearing of such things, for, with all her sweetness, she was capable of stern and fierce thoughts. Ovando, we are told, strove much to justify himself; but the Queen was resolved to make "a great demonstration" (these are the very words used), and she is reported to have said to the President of the Council, "I will have you take such a *residencia* of him as never was before."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Ovando maintained his place, probably on account of the Queen's illness, which began to be severe in August 1504: and this is the last occasion on which Queen Isabella is heard of as taking part in the affairs of the Indies.

It was about this time, late in the year 1504, that Columbus returned to Spain after his fourth voyage, which had proved very disastrous. Poor, old, infirm, he had now to receive intelligence which was to deepen all his evils. He remained at Seville, too unwell to make a journey himself, but sent his son Diego to court, to manage his affairs for him. The complaints of

<sup>1</sup> [The year 1503 is also noticeable as that in which was founded the Casa de Contratacion, or Board of Indian Trade at Seville. It was established by an ordinance of 20th January 1503, and its members were given control of the fleets going to or coming from the colonies, the registration of merchandise sent out or home, the licensing of passengers, and, eventually, of all civil and criminal causes arising from the Indian trade. They were also to inquire into the natural productions of the new possessions, to recommend to the government any measures likely to foster commerce, and to exercise general authority in all colonial matters except those purely political. Even after the formation of the Council of the Indies, the power of the Casa remained very great.]

<sup>2</sup> HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 6, cap. 4. Madrid, 1730.

the Admiral, that he had no news from court, are quite touching. He says, he desires to hear news each hour. Couriers are arriving every day, but none for him: his very hair stands on end to hear things so contrary to what his soul desires.<sup>1</sup> He alludes, I imagine, to the state of the Queen's health, for in a memorandum of instructions to his son, written at this period, the first thing, he says, to be done is, "to commend affectionately, with much devotion," the soul of the Queen to God. Could the poor Indians but have known what a friend to them was dying, one continued wail would have gone up to heaven from Hispaniola and all the western islands. The dread decree, however, had gone forth, and on the 26th of November 1504, it was only a prayer for the departed that could have been addressed; for the great Queen was no more. If it be permitted to departing spirits to see those places on earth they yearn much after, we might imagine that the soul of Isabella would give "one longing, lingering look" to the far West.

And if so, what did she see there? How different was the aspect of things from what governors and officers of all kinds had told her: how different from aught that she had thought of, or commanded! She had maintained, that the Indians were to be free: she would have seen their condition to be that of slaves. She had declared, that they were to have spiritual instruction: she would have seen them less instructed than the dogs. She had insisted that they should receive payment for their labour: she would have found that all they received was a mockery of wages, just enough to purchase once, perhaps, in the course of a year, some childish trifles from Castille. She had always ordered that they should have kind treatment and proper maintenance: she would have seen them literally watching under the tables of their masters, to catch the crumbs which fell there. She would have beheld the Indian labouring at the mine under cruel buffetings, his family neglected, perishing, or enslaved; she would have

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Columbus to his son Diego.—NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, i, p. 338.

marked him on his return after eight months of dire toil, enter a place which knew him not, or a household that could only sorrow over the gaunt creature who had returned to them, and mingle their sorrows with his; or, still more sad, she would have seen Indians who had been brought from far distant homes, linger at the mines, too hopeless, or too careless, to return.<sup>1</sup>

Turning from what might have been seen by Queen Isabella, had her departing gaze pierced to the outskirts of her dominions, we may note what were her latest provisions in their behalf. Her will, as regards Ferdinand, was to the following effect: she bequeathed the Regency of Castille to him in case of certain specified contingencies; and she left him half the produce of the Indies, and a definite sum charged upon the three military orders—both of these legacies being limited to his lifetime. The following are her words touching the conduct she wished to be pursued towards the Indians. After declaring that the ground, on which they (the Catholic Sovereigns) had received these kingdoms from the Pope, was to bring the people to Christianity, “wherefore,” she goes on to say, “I very affectionately supplicate my lord the King, and charge and command my said daughter (Juana) that they act accordingly, and that this (the conversion of the Indians) should be their principal end, and that in it they should have much diligence, and that they should not consent or give occasion, that the Indians who dwell in those islands or on the Tierra-firme, gained, or to be gained, should receive any injury in their persons or goods, but should command that they be well and justly treated. And if the Indians have received any injury, they (the King, and her daughter Juana) should remedy it, and look that they do not infringe in any respect

<sup>1</sup> [Isabella, who, in the higher sense of the word, was a far greater statesman than Ferdinand, since she looked beyond the material gains of the moment, fostered agriculture and commerce in the Indies by introducing from Spain everything that seemed likely to be useful—oxen, goats, pigs, wheat, rice, olives, silk, hemp, and other things. As soon as she died, this principle of action was neglected.]

that which is enjoined and commanded in the words of the said concession (of the Pope)."<sup>1</sup>

Having thus transcribed the injunctions of this pious and admirable Princess, we have to return, with somewhat of a foreboding mind, to the history of those poor Indians to whom she meant so kindly.

This bequest of Isabella's of half the revenues of the Indies was not well-advised. It is said that Ferdinand attended more to profit from the Indies than to the preservation of them. This statement is probably much exaggerated; but certainly to leave a portion of the proceeds, for life only, of such an estate, was not the way to ensure its being well administered. Still, it would be laying too much stress upon this bequest, to attribute any very remarkable consequences to it. The truth is, that the troubles and confusions which ensued in Spain on Isabella's death, made it almost impossible for Ferdinand, or for any one else in Spain, to give the requisite attention to the affairs of the Indies.

The story of these troubles is well known, but, for the sake of clearness, it may as well be briefly recapitulated here. The Castillian nobles did not wish to have Ferdinand for their master. If it was only on account of being tired of his rule (whether it were good or bad), that was, perhaps, a sufficient motive to sway them. Negotiations ensued between Ferdinand and his son-in-law Philip, which led to no amicable result. Ferdinand was nearly successful in procuring a paper signed by Juana constituting him Regent, which being discovered by Philip, he immediately placed his wife in confinement. Ferdinand resolved to marry again, and allied himself to the French king, Louis XII., taking to wife Germaine de Foix, niece of that monarch. Upon this Philip came to terms with Ferdinand; and an agreement was made, by which the regency of Castille was shared between them.

In 1506, Philip came over from Flanders with Juana to Spain;<sup>2</sup> and, notwithstanding the compact mentioned

<sup>1</sup> For a copy of the will, see MARIANA, *Hist. Gen. de España*, Valencia, 1796, tom. 9, Apéndice.

<sup>2</sup> [It was during this voyage, in January 1506, that Philip and Juana



above, demanded the sole authority over the kingdom which had descended to his wife. A large majority of the Spanish nobles siding with Philip, the old King had to give way; and he went to visit his newly-conquered kingdom of Naples. Philip lived but a short time to enjoy the exercise of his authority; for in three months after gaining possession of the Castillian crown, he suddenly fell ill at Burgos, and died in that city, on the 25th of October 1506.

A few months before, a much more important person in history had also departed this life. Columbus, since his return from his fourth voyage to the Indies, had done little else than memorialize, and petition, and negotiate, about his rights and his claims. The proverb, "Fear old age, for it does not come alone,"<sup>1</sup> was especially applicable to him, while suffering sickness without the elasticity to bear it, poverty with high station and debt, and all the delay of suitorship, not at the beginning, but at the close, of a career. A similar decline of fortune is to be seen in the lives of many men; of those, too, who have been most adventurous and successful in their prime. Their fortunes grow old and feeble with themselves; and those clouds, which were but white and scattered during the vigour of the day, sink down together, stormful and massive, in huge black lines, across the setting sun.

Shortly after the arrival of Philip and his Queen in Spain, Columbus had written to their Highnesses, deploring his inability to come to them, through illness, and saying that, notwithstanding his pitiless disease (the gout), he could yet do them service the like of which had not been seen.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he meant service in the way of good advice touching the administration of the Indies; perhaps, for he was of an indomitable spirit, that he could yet make

were driven into Weymouth by bad weather, and were compelled to accept for three months the calculating hospitality of Henry VII. Henry repaid himself for it, or Philip freed himself from it, by the treaty of commerce his Flemish subjects at once dubbed the "*Intercursus Malus*."]

<sup>1</sup> "Time senectutem; non enim sola venit."

<sup>2</sup> "Although this disease now racks me pitilessly, yet can I do them service the like of which has not been seen."—NAVARRETE, *Col. de Viages*, iii, p. 530.

more voyages of discovery. But there was then only left for him that voyage in which the peasant who has seen but the little district round his home, and the great travellers in thought and deed, are alike to find themselves upon the unknown waters of further life. Looked at in this way, what a great discoverer each of us is to be! But we must not linger too long, even at the deathbed of a hero. Having received all the Sacraments of the Church, and uttering as his last words, "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum,*" Columbus died, at Valladolid, on Ascension Day, the 20th of May 1506. His remains were carried to Seville and buried in the monastery of Las Cuevas; afterwards they were removed to the Cathedral at St. Domingo, and in modern times, were taken to the Cathedral at Havana, where they now are.<sup>1</sup>

King Ferdinand ordered an epitaph to be inscribed for Columbus at Seville, which tells in the fewest words that he had given a new world to Castille and Leon.<sup>2</sup>

"A Castilla y a Leon  
Nuevo Mundo dió Colon."

The death of Columbus is the most memorable event which occurred in Spain between the time of Philip's landing and his decease. That King being dead, there could now be no reasonable opposition to Ferdinand; Juana was quite incompetent; Charles but a boy; and so the affairs of Spain and the Indies were once again administered by one of the wariest and most experienced of monarchs.

During the interval between Isabella's death in 1504, and the restoration of King Ferdinand to the regency of Castille in 1506, there are, as may be expected, but few documents relating to the government of the Indies. One letter, however, has been found, of much importance. Not long after Ovando had come to the government of Hispaniola, it appears that he "solicited that no negro slaves should be sent to Hispaniola, for they fled amongst

<sup>1</sup> [In 1877 the clergy of the cathedral at San Domingo claimed to have discovered the real remains of the Admiral. Much has been written for and against the claim.]

<sup>2</sup> [Ferdinand ordered neither monument nor motto; see *ante*, p. 90.]

the Indians and taught them bad customs, and never could be captured.”<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, not a little astonishing to find a letter from the King to Ovando, dated Segovia, the 15th of September 1505, of the following tenor. “I will send more negro slaves as you request, I think there may be a hundred. At each time” (*I suppose at each time of their going to the mines*) “a trustworthy person will go with them who may have some share in the gold they may collect, and may promise them ease if they work well.”<sup>2</sup> There is some appearance in this of Indians becoming scarce, or being found to be deficient in physical energy for the severest kind of labour. It is important to notice that negroes, in some numbers, were employed in the Indies much earlier than has been supposed.<sup>3</sup>

It has been seen that the troubled state of the mother country was one of the causes of the injury to the Indies, which took place about this period. Another cause doubtless was, that the knowledge of the Queen's death (the Queen having always been a vigorous defender of the natives) removed a wholesome restraint from the Spanish colonists. Moreover, it must be acknowledged, that the tendency of the state of things which existed then in the Spanish colonies, even under favourable administration, must have been downwards—so that even such a sovereign as Isabella at the head of affairs, a true-hearted Columbus as governor, with a Las Casas ever at his side to plead the cause of the Indians (had such a

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 5, cap. 12.

<sup>2</sup> El Rey a Obando—Segovia, 15 de Setiembre de 1505.—*Coleccion de MUÑOZ*, MS., tom. 90.

<sup>3</sup> [Ovando's instructions permitted the export of negroes “born in the power of Christians” (*ante*, p. 127), usually understood to mean slaves born in Spain, and therefore baptised. Isabella is said to have suspended the traffic, but Ferdinand renewed it, because “without being indifferent to the conversion of the Indians he had not the ardent zeal of his wife, and, as by her will she had left him half the product of the royal revenues of the new world, his interest was to increase them by the labour of negroes infinitely more productive than that of the weak Indians” (J. A. Saco, *Hist. de la Esclavitud*, p. 62). This writer believes that the existence of an order of 1506 for the expulsion of negroes from Española proves an early traffic in black slaves “run” from the west coast (see also *ante*, p. 5).]



concurrence been permitted), would have had difficulty enough to prevent the *encomienda* system from falling into great abuse. A total change of system, such as with the experience of centuries, we, if we were lookers-on, might, in this nineteenth century devise, would, perhaps, have averted the mischief; or even such a system as that adopted by the Paraguay missionaries. But that was not to be, and could hardly be expected. In Ferdinand's government of the Indies, there are many proofs of sagacity; many, too, of anxiety for the welfare of the Indians: and we must be careful not to lay any undue share of blame upon this shrewd Monarch for that deterioration of the Indies which now took place.

One of the first things, however, which the King did, must have been mischievous; and, indeed, Herrera puts it down as the beginning of the perdition of Hispaniola; though, as I have stated, there was much reason to apprehend that such perdition was manifestly impending, and was indeed inevitable, unless a totally new system were adopted.<sup>1</sup>

The troublous and perplexed condition of Spain from Isabella's death to Ferdinand's return from Naples to take the regency, and for some time after, must have made many suitors for royal favour whom it was hard to deny. Ferdinand was not fond of giving, and with the great and costly affairs he was engaged in, seldom had much to give. Indians, however, were now a sort of money. The courtiers asked for *repartimientos* of Indians—some proposing to go themselves to Hispaniola and push their fortunes there, and others intending merely to farm their Indians out, as absentee proprietors. Ferdinand did not resist these applications; and though the Governor Ovando, probably aware of the mischief, and alive to the incon-

<sup>1</sup> OVIEDO, not only an historian but a man versed in affairs, who, at the time he wrote the following sentence, was acting as Alcalde of the fortress of St. Domingo, enumerates under four heads the causes of ill-government in Hispaniola:—1. The distance from Spain. 2. The want of truth amongst men. 3. The want of time at court to investigate things. 4. The lateness of any remedy, even when an evil was understood and provided against.

I think, admitting the weight of all the causes named above, the greatest cause was the want of consideration for the natives.

venience, remonstrated as much as he dared, especially against absentee proprietors, there were many cases in which he must have been obliged to give way. The mania for gold-finding was now probably at its height<sup>1</sup>; and the sacrifice of Indian life proportionately great. At the same time, however, that the King is chargeable with furthering this great mischief of giving *repartimientos*, it is to be observed that he was not inattentive to those things which were, or were supposed to be, for the true interests of the colony.<sup>2</sup> He promoted discovery; he encouraged the growth of the sugar cane; he urged the building of churches (not too costly); he allowed all his subjects to trade to the Indies (hitherto it had only been permitted to the favoured inhabitants of Seville); he looked after the pearl fisheries; he took Amerigo Vespucci into his service; and in short, like a prudent man, sought to make the most of his estate, furthering whatever was humane, when it came in his way to do so. As regards the *repartimientos*, he did not look upon them as final and irrevocable, but only as subsisting during his pleasure.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 470,000 pesos of gold were found annually.—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 6, cap. 18.

<sup>2</sup> ["The system of *encomiendas* or *repartimientos* for life was the base on which rested private property, the crown revenues, and the social relations of the Spanish and indigenous races in the Indian possessions."—*Relaciones Geograficas de Indias*, Madrid, 1881. There is an undated but early letter printed by Ricardo Cappa (*Estudios Criticos acerca de la Dominacion Española en America*, Madrid, 1894, v, p. 11), which clearly brings out the needs of the early settlements, and the difficulties in the way of dealing with them,—“That in farming, arable, grazing, and gardening cultivation consists the future of Española is clear beyond argument, and so from such labourers the Indies receives much benefit, for the future depends upon it. But how to carry out the purpose is the difficulty, because your Lordship must understand that the labourers, and all those who go to the Indies, have in their minds a fancy picture of the grandeur and riches of the Indies, of which they have confused notions; and arriving and finding that they have no wine, and have to eat roots, and that the gold and silver they dreamed of is a fantasy—they soon abominate the country, and, imagining that the gold and silver is in some other part of the Indies, they run away there.”]

<sup>3</sup> Valladolid, 12th November 1509 . . . DON FERDINANDO, etc. . . . “and whereas in the foregoing there was no specified time named during which the allotted Indians were to be held, we command by this that they shall be held during our will and pleasure, and no longer.”—*Col. de MUÑOZ*, MS., vol. 90.

As the Indians in Hispaniola were now beginning to grow scarce, the next thing that was almost sure to happen, was, that importations would be made from other islands to fill up the vacuum produced by the working at the mines, and by other causes. The first large transaction of this kind furnishes us with one of the most affecting narratives in history. The King was told that the Lucayan islands<sup>1</sup> were full of Indians, and that it would be a very good action to bring them to Hispaniola, "in order that they might enjoy the preaching and political customs," which the Indians in Hispaniola enjoyed. "Besides," it was added, "they might assist in getting gold, and the King be much served." The King accordingly gave a licence, and the evil work commenced.

It will be remembered that the first land seen by Columbus, and called by him St. Salvador, was one of these Lucayan islands; and it is peculiarly shocking to think that this spot should have been signalized by such an atrocity as that about to be recorded.

The first Spaniards who went to entrap these poor Lucayans did it in a way that brings to mind the old proverb of "seething a kid in its mother's milk"—for they told the simple people that they had come from the heaven of their forefathers, where these forefathers and all whom the Indians had loved in life were now drinking in the delights of heavenly ease: and the good Spaniards would convey the Lucayans to join their much-loved ancestors, and dearer ones than ancestors, who had gone thither.<sup>2</sup> We may fancy how the more simple amongst

<sup>1</sup> The names of the Lucayan islands, according to OVIEDO, were as follows:—Guanahani, Caycos, Jumeto, Yabaque, Mayaguana, Samana, Guanima, Yuma, Curatheo, Ciguatéo, Bahama (which is the largest of all), Yucayo and Nequa, Habacoa, and many other small islets.—*Hist. de las Indias*, l. 2, c. 6. [There are 36 islands, 687 cays, and 2414 rocks in the Bahamas.]

<sup>2</sup> "They said that they came from Española, where the souls of their fathers and friends lived happily, and that if they would go and see them they should be carried in the ships—for it is certain that all the Indian races believe in the immortality of the soul, and that, when the body died, it went to certain pleasant places where nothing was wanting that could give it pleasure. Some of them believed that they had first to endure some punishment for sins committed in this life."—HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 7, cap. 3.

them, lone women and those who felt this life to be somewhat dreary, crowded round the ships which were to take them to the regions of the blest.<sup>1</sup>

This hideous pretence of the Spaniards did its work; but there were other devices, not mentioned to us, which were afterwards adopted; and the end was, that in five years forty thousand of these deluded Lucayans were carried to Hispaniola. Most men in the course of their lives have rude awakenings which may enable them to form some notion of what it was to come down from the hope of an immediate paradise to working as a slave in a mine. Some lived on in patient despair; others of fiercer nature, refusing sustenance, and flying to dark caves and unfrequented places, poured forth their lives, and we may hope were now, indeed, with the blest. Others, of more force and practical energy, "peradventure the wisest," as Peter Martyr says, made escape to the northerly parts of Hispaniola, and there, with "arms outstretched" towards their country, lived at least to drink in the breezes from their native lands. Those lands were now a paradise to them.

There is a tree in Hispaniola called the yaurumá; a large, light, pithy tree. A Lucayan more enterprising than the rest, who had been a carpenter in his own island, cut down one of the yaurumás, hollowed it out, provisioned the hollow part with maize and some calabashes of water; then put the stems of smaller trees across the main trunk; then lashed those stems together with *bezuco*s, which are stringy roots like cords; and filling in well with leaves the

<sup>1</sup> I picture to myself some sad Indian, not without his doubts of these Spanish inducements, but willing to take the chance of regaining the loved past, and saying, like the King Arthur of a beautiful modern poem to his friend Sir Bedivere upon the shore,—

"I am going a long way  
With these thou seest — if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

ALFRED TENNYSON, *Morte d'Arthur*, ii, p. 15.

interstices between the stems, thus made something of a raft.<sup>1</sup> He took on board with him another Indian man and a woman, being all three related to each other; and having provided themselves with oars, away they paddled, having the north star for their guide. There is somewhat of immortality in a stout-hearted action, and though long past, it seems still young and full of life: one feels quite anxious now, as if those Indians were yet upon that sea, to know what becomes of them. On they went, day after day, night after night; the loathed Hispaniola had long been out of view: they had already gone two hundred miles. "Cheer up, sister Indian, not many mornings will dawn upon us ere we behold our own dear land again." But what, alas! is that black thing in the distance? No land of home—but one of those accursed caravels coming, perhaps, with more Lucayans. It has already seen our raft, and the bold wanderers are again in the power of their adversaries, are again on their way to the hated Hispaniola.

The careful reader of history, who wishes, if possible, to make out what it all means, will treasure up these slight incidents, as the astute man of the world marks the small traits of character in those whom it is his interest to understand thoroughly. Further on, there will be much controversy as to the capability of these Indians, which question an intelligent reader may be able to solve without Dr. Sepulveda, Las Casas, or any theologian or statesman whatever.

This enormity in dealing with the wretched Lucayans, is one of the last acts mentioned of Ovando's government. Diego Columbus had for some time been urging the King to give him the rights which he claimed as his father's heir. He was enabled to urge his claim with more effect, having married Maria de Toledo, a grand-niece of Ferdinand's, and niece of the Duke of Alva. That Duke had great claims upon the King, being one of the nobles who had distinguished himself by a steady adherence to Ferdinand, when the young King Philip's star was in the ascendant. Ferdinand allowed Don Diego's cause to be heard in the courts. It was as if he

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 7, cap. 3.



had said, "Let right be done," as the phrase is here, when the sovereign gives permission that a cause against the crown shall be heard in the courts of law. And right was so far done as to appoint Don Diego, Admiral and Governor of the Indies, but "without prejudice" to the rights of either party—that is, I imagine, as to whether the governorship was to be hereditary in the family of Columbus or not.<sup>1</sup>

The arrival of Don Diego Columbus in Hispaniola closes the administration of Ovando,<sup>2</sup>—an administration which received much praise from the Spaniards, even from those who lived under it, who in after years still continued to regret this Governor's departure.

Thinking, however, on what the Indians must have suffered during his time, we cannot look on his administration, as a whole, otherwise than with profound regret and dissatisfaction, though we must not lay the entire blame upon him, and make him out to be a monster in human form. The modern historian of St. Domingo<sup>3</sup> says, it is remarkable that the governors of the Indies, even those who were noted as good men before, all turned out cruel tyrants. This uniformity might have suggested to the good father the strength of the current of evil into which these men were thrown, and which, perhaps, none but a really great man could have stemmed.

The extent of the evil which had taken place in Ovando's time may be seen from a letter of the King's written in May 1509, about two months before Ovando's government ended. "You say," writes the King, "that there are few Indians in this island, and that it will be well to bring them from other islands; I now order the

<sup>1</sup> [By a Cédula of 9th August 1508. The actual nomination was by another of 21st October.]

<sup>2</sup> [A Cédula of 3rd May 1509 ordered Ovando to give Diego Columbus every information, as he was less well informed of insular affairs.—"I charge and command you that as soon as the said Admiral arrives, and before you depart to come home, you shall inform him very fully of everything relating to the government of the said island."]

<sup>3</sup> FATHER CHARLEVOIX.

Governor that he should provide for the mines as many Indians as may be requisite."<sup>1</sup>

Few Indians! "It is most populous," said the first discoverer. There were twelve hundred thousand souls, declares the ardent Las Casas; and in recording the treachery practised towards Anacaona, an historian<sup>2</sup> who had access to all official documents speaks of the large numbers in her province of Xaragua.

If history did indeed constitute that high court of appeal in virtue of which each generation sat in judgment upon all the preceding ages, then the tribunal of the present day might well exclaim with indignation, "Ovando, and the rest of you Spanish colonists and authorities, what had become of all those Indians?"

I am afraid that, answering what they could for themselves, making much of the deaths by famine and disease, and which might fairly be put down as unavoidable, there would still remain a fearful number of their brethren of whom they could not say that they were not the keepers. And brethren they were, though then—and this is some excuse for these Spaniards—it was not thought so.

Arraigned before the bar of history, as I have just imagined Ovando to be, we must hear what an advocate would say for him. He would tell us that this Governor did keep order amongst the Spaniards; that he did not enrich himself, needing money even for his passage home<sup>3</sup>; that what property he chanced to have in the island, he left for charitable purposes; and that we hear of no private vice in him. Faultless to his order, faithful to his King, complete in panoply of personal virtue, with true Castillian dignity in his demeanour, so that to gain respect he needed not the title of Lordship, which in his humility he would not take—what is there to justify your condemnation of him?

And we on the other side should answer, that that kind of character was not unknown to us, which, free from the softer and the weaker vices and vanities, was yet fit to

<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand to the Governor and Officers of Hispaniola, 3rd May 1509.—*Coleccion de MUÑOZ*, MS., vol. 90.

<sup>2</sup> HERRERA.

<sup>3</sup> "When he left he had to borrow five hundred castellanos for his journey."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 3, cap. 12.

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preside over, or countenance, such treachery as that of Xaragua, such cruelties as those in Higüey, such tearings asunder as those in the Lucayan islands. And we should add that he gave up the weak to the oppression of the strong; that as these oppressed ones died away, he collected the survivors together again, like a pack of cards, and dealt them out anew to those whom he favoured, thus mingling folly with cruelty, till nature pronounced against his government by its desolation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "In the eight years of his government, more than nine-tenths (of the Indians) perished."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 81.

# BOOK IV

## THE DOMINICANS

### CHAPTER I

**DON DIEGO COLUMBUS LANDS AT ST. DOMINGO—NEW REPARTI-  
MIENTOS—EARLIEST NOTICE OF LAS CASAS—ARRIVAL OF  
THE FIRST DOMINICAN FRIARS—HISPANIOLA DISPEOPLED—  
MODES OF REPLENISHING THE COLONY WITH INDIANS—  
NEGROES IN THE INDIES**

**I**N the midst of the crash of dynasties, the downfall of kingdoms, and the wild havoc in great cities which prevails in these unquiet times,<sup>1</sup> the study of any transaction which occurred a long while ago, which may not be dramatic, or at least, not of the same liveliness as the present proceedings in the world, and which derives most of its importance from the largeness of the result, and not from the imposing presence of the means, seems somewhat tame and profitless. And, indeed, in all stirring periods, those engaged in the ordinary affairs of life, especially those who are students, whether readers or writers, feel as if they had been left behind; or as a man sitting in a gloomy room confined by ill-health or dull business, while at intervals comes in the merry noise of boisterous children playing in the sun.

But these feelings and fancies are fallacious. The essential greatness of a thing often lies altogether in the principle upon which it is done. The mere physical fate of empires, monarchies and popedoms, much less of mere swarms of thoughtless people, may not be equal in depth and significance to one man's one sin; nor, on the other hand, is a great example of duty performed, though of a

<sup>1</sup> Written A.D. 1848.

simple character (as we shall find in this coming chapter of the doings of some poor monks), to be postponed in consideration to the most loud-sounding battlefields and ever so much frivolous slaughter. There is a similar thing in fiction: an old Greek drama, which shall have but one mind brought before you greatly tortured by conflicting passions and duties, presents some picture of the universe, throws a sudden light down into the abysses of human misery and madness, and rivets the attention immeasurably more than an ill-told, inconsequent tragedy, in which, however, the deaths may be as numerous as the perplexed spectator can desire.

Still less is the benefit which may be derived from the study of history to be measured by the noise and pageantry of the things recorded; but rather by the examples they afford and the formation of character they give rise to. Men have not outgrown the aid which history might afford them: duty—political duty—still requires to be expounded and inculcated; greatness is not yet fully understood; and to revert to the image used above, the man who would come down from his dull chamber and play well with those children in the sun, had better have made up his mind in quiet of what it is well to play at, and what should be the rules of the game.

So, too, the student of the records of Spanish America may be content, in the midst of all this present tumult, to go on quietly with his work and make the most he can of a story which will show what the vain doctrines and desires of men, their cruelty, their piety and their charity, all mingling together, did with the materials which a so-called "New World" afforded them.

The new Governor Don Diego Columbus and his wife Maria de Toledo arrived at St. Domingo in July 1509. The island had not before been graced by a Spanish lady of her rank; and the arrival of the new authorities was honoured by a large assemblage of the colonists and by grand festivities of various kinds. Behind all this scenic representation of greatness, there was, as often happens, but little real power.<sup>1</sup> The Governor did not possess the

<sup>1</sup> [Diego Columbus petitioned more than once about the royal

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King's confidence (it is a question whether any Viceroy would have long enjoyed that), which was chiefly bestowed upon the Treasurer Pasamonte. There was a correspondence carried on between the King and this officer, in cypher, which did not bode Don Diego much good, for Pasamonte was a steady enemy of his.<sup>1</sup> And the Treasurer was only one out of many enemies whom the son of Columbus had to encounter, both in Hispaniola and in Spain.

Before entering upon the transactions of the new Governor, it remains to be seen what became of Ovando. A *residencia* was held, as usual, upon the late Governor and the two Alcaldes Mayores, which terminated favourably, and left no stain upon them. There was no *residencia* in this life, as Las Casas remarks, about the treatment of the poor oppressed Indians; and with regard to the Spaniards, if indeed their welfare could be considered as a separate thing from that of the Indians, it has always been acknowledged that Ovando managed his own countrymen with much vigour and discretion. Indeed, there must have been something good about Ovando. Las Casas, a fair judge of character, admiring greatness of every kind, was evidently attached to this Governor. Would to God, he exclaims, that the final judgment (not man's *residencia*) may have been favourable to him; for

custom of addressing despatches to him and the officials of Española conjointly. Diego petitioned about everything to such an extent that it became a saying in Spain that such a one "writes more than Columbus."

<sup>1</sup> [The settlers were divided into two factions, known as "Servidores" and "Deservidores," the former, led by Pasamonte, being supposed to be loyal servants of the king, while the latter, adhering to Diego Columbus, were taunted, by the name applied to them, for lack of the duty expected from them. Diego's adherents were mostly old settlers who had known his father. A Spanish writer says of both these parties that they "mutually hated each other; no elevated sentiment or noble idea touched them, and swayed by low passions and self-interest they sought only to prosper and enrich themselves by the labour of the Indians."

As Sir Arthur Helps remarks, Pasamonte was a favourite at court. There is among the English state papers (*Letters and Papers of Henry VIII.*, 6th Jan. 1518), a letter from him, written at San Domingo, to Katherine of Aragon, informing her that he had sent some native curiosities, and written in a very friendly and familiar style.]

## INSTRUCTIONS TO DIEGO COLUMBUS 167

"in truth I loved him, with the exception of those errors into which he fell through moral blindness."

There is a story of Ovando from which we may, perhaps, infer that he was not deficient in good-nature to those about him. Some official person had been extravagant, and was ruined. Ovando liked the man, and attending at the sale of his effects, contrived to raise the prices so that all the debts were satisfied, every one striving by excessive biddings to please the Governor. This was not a very high-minded or correct proceeding; but still there is a good nature in it we might not have expected from so stern a man. He returned home safely to Spain, and was well received by Ferdinand, but did not exercise any influence upon Indian affairs, dying a short time after his arrival. He is said to have written some account of his government, which has not yet reached posterity; but, amongst the treasures which lie hid in Spanish libraries, it may still be found, and will probably throw light upon those times. It would be curious to see what he says of some of the doings at Xaragua and elsewhere. Peace be with him. Happily he was to be judged by One who understood him infinitely better than he could his fellow-men, the Indians.

We turn now to the proceedings of Don Diego Columbus. The King's instructions to this Governor had been given partly in writing, and partly by word of mouth<sup>1</sup>; and, as regards the Indians, were to the following effect: that they should be well treated, being made Christians of, with much management, "little by little, without scandalizing them<sup>2</sup>;" that they should live together in settlements, each of them possessing a cottage and land for himself, which he should not be allowed to part with for less than its just value; that they should have their own magistrates, and be under the government of their Caciques. That, with regard to bringing Indians from other parts of the Indies to Hispaniola, it might be done, if the Indians in question were Caribs, or had made resistance. That the Indians who worked in the mines should labour with

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, l. 7, c. 8. NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 169.

<sup>2</sup> [They were not to be allowed to keep their traditional feasts and ceremonies, but were to be gradually accustomed to live as Christians.]

moderation; and with that view, as the King heard that many of the Indians had died who were brought to Hispaniola, he would, for the first year, demand less tribute for each Indian, that so their masters might demand less work from them.

These laws of Ferdinand's were well-intentioned, and to a certain extent sagacious; but as they were all subject to the old system of *repartimientos*, much could not be hoped from them. It would, perhaps, have astonished the King, if any one had accused him of furthering a slavery which he put so many restraints upon; but that one thing alone, the permission to bring Indians from other parts of the Indies to Hispaniola, however guarded, was sure to lead to the greatest abuse. Who was to define resistance? Who was to say whether resistance had, or had not, been made?

Don Diego began by giving *repartimientos* of Indians to himself, his wife, and to those who had royal orders for these gifts; and it is said that the Indians were not treated better in this Governor's time than in Ovando's.<sup>1</sup> An arrival, from which the natives had much more to hope than from the coming of any governor, or other lay authority, was that of a vessel which reached St. Domingo in the year following, A.D. 1510, and which was honoured

<sup>1</sup> [When Ovando went out, he was ordered to draw up and send home a book showing the *repartimientos* existing. He neglected to do this, and the same order was repeated to Diego Columbus, who did not perform it satisfactorily. A despatch of 23rd November 1511 directed him to send details as to the number of Caciques in Española, their names, and how many Indians were subject to each one; the names of the Spaniards to whom they were allotted, and how many each Spaniard possessed; how many Indians were employed in the mines, and how many in other labour; how many were unfit for labour by reason of youth or age; and what Spaniards held *repartimientos* by royal grant or otherwise, and how many of these were resident (*Relaciones Geográficas de Indias*, Madrid, 1881, i, p. xxxiii).]

By an order of 14th August 1509, a scale of division was made for the guidance of Don Diego Columbus. Any official appointed by the king or his daughter was entitled to one hundred Indians, others, lower in the social scale, seventy or eighty, and farmers thirty each. Any human surplus was to be distributed *pro rata*, and owners were to instruct the Indians in the Faith and pay a peso of gold per head each year for their use. (*Col. de Doc. Inéd. relativos al . . . antiguas posesiones Españolas*, viii, p. lxxxviii).]



in carrying the first Dominican friars who appeared in those lands. In the records of this year, too, there appears the earliest notice of Las Casas, who sang the first "new mass" in the Indies.<sup>1</sup> As from this point in the narrative his philanthropic efforts will perpetually reappear before the reader, it will be well to give some description of this remarkable man.

Bartholomew de Las Casas was the son of Antonio de Las Casas, one of Columbus's shipmates in his first voyage. Bartholomew was born in 1474. His father became rich, and sent him as a student to Salamanca, where he took a licentiate's degree. He came with Ovando to Hispaniola in 1502, was afterwards ordained priest, and now, at the age of thirty-six, eight years after his arrival in the Indies, began to make his appearance on the stage of history. He was a very notable person, of that force of character and general ability, that he would have excelled in any career. Indeed, he did fulfil three or four vocations, being an eager man of business, a considerable annalist, a great reformer, a great philanthropist, and a vigorous ecclesiastic. The utmost that friends or enemies, I imagine, could with the slightest truth allege against him, was an over-fervent temperament. If we had to arrange the faculties of great men, we should generally, according to our easy-working fancies, combine two characters to make our men of. And, in this case, we should not be sorry, if it might have been so, to have had a little of the wary nature of King Ferdinand intermixed with the nobler elements of Las Casas. Considering, however, what great things Las Casas strove after, and how much he accomplished, it is ungracious to dwell the least more than is needful upon any defect or superfluity of his. If it can be proved that he was on any occasion too impetuous in word or deed, it was in a cause that might have driven

<sup>1</sup> "This year the Licentiate, Bartholomew de Las Casas, a native of Seville, said Mass, which was the first 'New Mass' said in the Indies, and was attended in state by the Admiral and all who were in the city of La Vega."—HERRERA, dec. I, lib. 7, cap. 12.

The first mass said by a newly-ordained priest is called the "New Mass." From this it appears that Las Casas was the first priest ordained in the Indies. [A Papal Bull of 15th Nov. 1504 erected an archbishopric and two bishoprics in Española.]

\ any man charged with it beyond all bounds of prudence in the expression of his indignation. His ardent nature had the merit of being as constant as it was ardent. He was eloquent, acute, truthful, bold, self-sacrificing, pious. We need not do more in praise of such a character than show it in action,

In the whole course of West Indian colonization, a wise and humane forethought never could have been more wanted than at this period. Hispaniola was rapidly becoming depopulated of Indians; and, on the mode of renewing the population, we may almost say, depended the future destinies of slavery.<sup>1</sup> Ojeda and Nicuesa, whose career will afterwards be minutely narrated, had started upon their voyages, and, though with their own ruin, were to lay the foundations of a colony at Darien. Velazquez was to go over to Cuba in the course of this year;<sup>2</sup> which island was in its turn to be the starting-point of Cortes for still wider discovery and conquest. And what were the orders issued at this important and interesting period, upon which so much depended? On the 6th of June in this year,<sup>3</sup> the King wrote thus: "With respect to the doubt about bringing Indians from the island of Trinidad, look well if there is gold there, for you know what the Indians suffer in changing them from one place to another. Perhaps it will be better to make use of them there, but do what may seem best to you; and that more Indians may be brought, proclaim a licence for doing so without paying us the fifth of them; of which we make a present to the inhabitants of Hispaniola and San Juan.

"The conversion of the Indians is the principal foundation of the conquest, that which principally ought to be attended to. So act that the Indians there (in Trinidad) may increase and not diminish as in Hispaniola."

This is a most unsatisfactory and vacillating letter, which it is not harsh to construe shortly in this way—"Get gold,

<sup>1</sup> [A regulation of 23rd February 1512 permitted the export of female criminals to the Indies from Spain; an export tax of two ducats a head was levied.]

<sup>2</sup> [In 1511.]

<sup>3</sup> The King to the Admiral. Seville, 6th June 1511.—*Coleccion de Muñoz*, MS., vol. 90.

humanely if you can, but at all hazards, get gold, and here are facilities for you." The King tries to wash his hands of the ill consequences of this permission in a letter of the next month, in which he says "take care that our conscience be not burdened, and that the importation of Indians be without damage to them and to our people. I feel much the great loss of people (Spanish people) that Nicuesa and Ojeda have had."<sup>1</sup>

These are but useless words: how was it possible to enter a country, take a number of its people and transport them to another place, in any velvet manner? The only thing to be said for the King is, that he was deeply engaged in wars and negotiations at home, and had to meet the expenses consequent thereon. These poor Indians could little have conceived how much the troubles in the Italian states concerned their welfare, and were eventually to be paid for by them.

That the reader may better understand the process by which Indians were now acquired, we may turn to a proclamation issued by the Ojeda mentioned above, and which was according to the general form used on similar occasions. It begins thus: "I, Alonzo de Ojeda, servant of the very high and powerful kings of Castille and Leon, notify and make known to you the following things."

The proclamation then proceeds to tell the Indians of the creation of man, and of all men being of one race, but of their having dispersed on account of their large increase, and having formed various provinces and nations. Then it declares how God gave charge of all these nations to one man called St. Peter, that he should be the head of the human race, and have rule over them all, and fix his seat at Rome "as the fittest place for governing the world." He was called Father, as the Father and

<sup>1</sup> "With regard to the necessity of bringing Indians, because they do not naturally increase in number and so many die, we have given up the payment of our fifth, but take care, etc."—The King to the Admiral and Officials, 25th July 1511. *Col. de Muñoz*, MS., vol. 90.

[An order of 20th July 1511 prohibited the overloading of Indians, under heavy penalties culminating in forfeiture of the *repartimiento* for a fourth offence; but, as Las Casas wrote in 1516, "of all the laws the Spaniards observe none save those enacted to have more Indians."]

Governor of all men. Then the proclamation goes on to say, how all the men of St. Peter's time obeyed him and took him for Lord, as likewise all men have obeyed his successors, and will continue to obey them to the end of time.

Having now established the Papal power, the proclamation proceeds to inform the Indians, how a certain Pope gave to the Catholic Sovereigns all these western islands and this western continent, as appears from certain writings which the Indians are told they may see if they like (*que podeis ver si quisieredes*). Then, they are duly informed how well the inhabitants of other islands, who have had this notice, have received his Majesty and obeyed him, listening without any resistance or delay to religious men, and becoming Christians; and how kind his Majesty has been to them. "Wherefore I entreat and require you," said Ojeda, or any other privateering discoverer, "that after taking due time to consider this, you acknowledge the Church as sovereign lady of the world, and the Pope in her name, and His Majesty, in his place as Lord of these isles and this continent, and that you receive these religious men. If you do so, His Majesty will greet you with all love and affection, and leave your wives and children free, and will give you many privileges and exemptions. But if you do not, by the help of God I will enter with power into your land, and will subdue you, and will take your wives and children and make slaves of them, and sell them as such, and take all your goods, and do you all the mischief I can, as to vassals that do not obey, and will not receive, their Lord. And I protest that all the death and destruction which may come from this is your fault, and not his Majesty's or mine, or that of my men."<sup>1</sup>

There is something irresistibly grotesque in this document. How remote and hazy must have been the conceptions of the Indians as to the meaning of the word "Church" (not an easy thing to explain at any time or to any people), or of such general terms as "privileges" and "exemptions!" Moreover, the difficulties inherent in the substance of the proclamation would not have been

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 14.

much smoothed over by translation. It was altogether farcical in the extreme to utter any such words to men who could so little understand them. But we must come to the serious part of the matter. Whenever this proclamation had no effect, and it was scarcely the interest of the proclaimers that it should have, then hostilities commenced, and those who were taken in war ("*Indios de guerra*," they were called) were branded and made slaves, and the fifth part of them given to the King.<sup>1</sup>

If the government of the Indians resident in Hispaniola had been ever so good at this time, and if there had been such communities as those pictured in the King's instructions to Don Diego Columbus, still what a great disturbance this perpetual introduction of slaves would have been to the well-being of the community. I do not believe, however, that any such communities, as the King speaks of, were formed at this period; and that the state of the Indians at peace was most wretched, we shall soon have good reason for concluding. Meanwhile, we must turn for a short time from the Indians to their brethren in adversity, and the heirs of their misfortunes, the negroes.

The royal historiographer, Herrera, speaks of the King having informed the Admiral Don Diego Columbus in 1510, that he had given orders to the officials at Seville that they should send fifty negroes to work in the mines of Hispaniola. We have already seen what the King had said to the former governor, Ovando, on the same point, and what number of slaves he had sent over. In June 1511, there is a sentence in one of the King's letters addressed to a man of the name of Sampier, who held some office in the colony, about the negroes, and which sentence runs thus: "I do not understand how so many negroes have died; take much care of them."<sup>2</sup> In October of the same year, there is an order from the King to his officials at Seville, authorizing them to pay Ledesma, one of the royal pilots, what was due to him for the last voyage he had made at the King's command

<sup>1</sup> BARCIA, *Historiadores*, i, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> El Rey à Sampier. Sevilla, 21 de Junio de 1511.—*Coleccion de MUÑOZ*, MS., tom. 90.

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to carry negroes to Hispaniola.<sup>1</sup> I wish the reader to keep these facts in mind. They are mentioned now as they occurred about this period.

Returning to the Indians, we find that concern for them developing itself amongst the Dominican monks in Hispaniola, which was hereafter to obtain such root in that brotherhood as almost to become one of the tenets of their faith. Grieved, astonished, and terrified must these good fathers have been at all the barbarities they heard of, and saw, on their arrival in the Indies. The treatment of the Indians was, no doubt, the daily talk at the convent: and at last the monks resolved to speak out their minds, whatever danger to themselves might come from it. The noble way in which they effected their purpose will be recorded in the ensuing chapter.

<sup>1</sup> "Pay to Pedro de Ledesma, our pilot, that which is owing to him for the last voyage that he made by our command to carry negroes to Española."—The King to the Magistrates of Seville, 24th October 1511.—*Col. MUÑOZ*, MS., vol. 90.

## CHAPTER II

THE DOMINICANS PROTEST AGAINST INDIAN SLAVERY—FATHER ANTONIO'S SERMON—BOTH THE COLONISTS AND THE MONKS APPEAL TO SPAIN—FATHER ANTONIO SEES THE KING—THE LAWS OF BURGOS

THE Dominican monks of Hispaniola were about twelve or fifteen in number, living under the government of their Vicar, Pedro de Cordova.<sup>1</sup> Coming to a new country, they had deepened the severity of their rules, so that it kept its due proportion with the general hardness of living throughout the colony. One of their new rules was, that they would not ask for bread, wine, or oil, except in cases of sickness; and their habitual fare was most scanty, and of the poorest description. Being fully intent upon the work they had undertaken, they would soon have comprehended, from their own observation, the extent of evil in the state of things about them; but their insight into the treatment of the Indians was rapidly enlarged, and their opinions confirmed, by the acquisition of a new lay brother. This was a man who had murdered his wife, an Indian woman, and then had fled to the woods, where he remained two years; but on the arrival of the Dominicans in the island, he sought what refuge from his sin and his sorrow could he found under the shadow of their order. This man

<sup>1</sup> [From the time of the discovery all the churches in the Indies were built, and the ministers of religion supported, mainly from the Tenth granted by Papal concessions to the crown of Spain. In 1541, the receipts from the Tenth were divided into four parts, of which half went to the bishops and cathedral chapters; the remaining half was divided into nine parts, of which two-ninths went to the crown, three-ninths for the construction and maintenance of churches and hospitals, and four-ninths for the salaries of parish priests. However, the revenue from the Tenth was frequently insufficient for these purposes, and it was then supplemented from the Royal Exchequer.—*Recopilacion de Leyes . . . de las Indias.*]

recounted to his brethren the cruelties he had been the witness of: and that narration may have brought them sooner to the determination they now adopted, which was, to make a solemn protest against the ways of their countrymen with the Indians.

The good monks determined that their protest should express the general opinion of their body: accordingly they agreed amongst themselves upon a discourse to be preached before the inhabitants of St. Domingo; and signed their names to it. They further resolved that brother Antonio Montesino should be the person to preach; a man, we are told, of great asperity in reprehending vice. In order to ensure a fit audience on the occasion, the monks took care to let the principal persons of St. Domingo know that some address of a remarkable kind, which concerned them much, was to be made to them and their attendance was requested. The Sunday came: Father Antonio ascended the pulpit, and took for his text a portion of the gospel of the day, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

There is only a short account of the sermon; but we may be certain that it was an energetic discourse: for, indeed, when anybody has anything to say, he can generally say it worthily. And here, instead of nice points of doctrine (over which, and not unreasonably, men can become eloquent, ingenious, wrathful, intense), was an evil uplifting itself before the eyes of all men, and respecting which neither preacher nor hearers could entrench themselves behind generalities. He told them that the sterile desert was an image of the state of their consciences; and then he declared with "very piercing and terrible words" (*palabras muy punyativas y terribles*) that "the voice" pronounced that they were living in "mortal sin" by reason of their tyranny to these innocent people, the Indians. What authority was there for the imposition of this servitude: what just ground for these wars? How could the colonists rightly insist upon such cruel labours as they did from the Indians; neglecting all care of them, both in the things of heaven and those of earth? Such Spaniards



he declared had no more chance of salvation than so many Moors, or Turks.

We shall but make a worthy ending to Father Antonio's sermon, if we imagine it to have concluded with words like those used by a very renowned Portuguese preacher on the same subject and a like occasion. "But you will say to me, this people, this republic, this state cannot be supported without Indians. Who is to bring us a pitcher of water or a bundle of wood? Who is to plant our mandioc? Must our wives do it? Must our children do it? In the first place, as you will presently see, these are not the straits in which I would place you: but if necessity and conscience require it, then I reply, yes! and I repeat it, yes! you and your wives and your children ought to do it! We ought to support ourselves with our own hands; for better is it to be supported by the sweat of one's own brow than by another's blood. O ye riches of Maranham! What if these mantles and cloaks<sup>1</sup> were to be wrung? they would drop blood."<sup>2</sup>

If we can throw ourselves back in imagination to that period, and make ourselves present at such a discourse, we might almost hear during it the occasional clang of arms, as men turned angrily about to one another and vowed that this must not go on any longer. They heard the sermon out, however, and went to dinner. After dinner, the principal persons conferred together for a short time, and then set off for the monastery, to make a fierce remonstrance. When they had come to the monastery, which, from its poor construction, might rather have been called a shed than a monastery, the Vicar, Pedro de Cordova, received them, and listened to their complaint. They insisted upon seeing the preacher himself, Father Antonio, declaring that he had preached "delirious things," and that he must make retractation next Sunday. A long parley ensued, in the course of which Pedro de Cordova informed the remonstrants that the sermon did not consist of the words of any one brother, but of the whole Dominican community. The angry de-

<sup>1</sup> Probably of a scarlet colour.

<sup>2</sup> VIEYRA's first sermon at St. Luiz, A.D. 1653, quoted in SOUTHEY'S *History of Brazil*, ii, p. 479.

putation exclaimed, that if Father Antonio did not unsay what he had said, the monks had better get ready their goods in order to embark for Spain. "Of a truth, my Lords," replied the Vicar, "that will give us little trouble"; which was true enough, for (as Las Casas mentions) all that the monks possessed—their books, clothes, and vestments for the mass—might have gone into two trunks. At last the colonists went away, upon the understanding that the matter would be touched upon next Sunday, and, as the remonstrants supposed, an ample apology would be offered to them.

The next Sunday came: there was no occasion this time to invite anybody to attend, for all the congregation were anxious to come, in the hope of being about to hear an apology to themselves from the pulpit. After mass, Father Antonio was again seen to ascend the pulpit. He gave out the text from the 36th chapter of Job, the 3rd verse: "*Repelam scientiam meam a principio, et operatorem meum probabo justum.*" Those of his audience who understood Latin, and were persons of any acuteness, perceived immediately what would be the drift of this sermon—and that it would be no less unwelcome to them than the previous one. And so it proved. Father Antonio only repeated his former statements, clenched his former arguments, and insisted upon his former conclusions. Moreover, he added that the Dominicans would not confess any man who made incursions amongst the Indians:—this the colonists might publish, and they might write to whom they pleased at Castille. The congregation heard Father Antonio out; and this time they did not go to the monastery; but they determined to send a complaint to the King, and afterwards to dispatch a Franciscan (monk against monk) to argue their case at court. Thither the colonists had already sent two agents to plead for having the Indians assigned to their *encomenderos* for two or three lives, or even in perpetuity.

The Franciscan chosen for this embassy was Alonso de Espinal, and he went out in great favour with the inhabitants of St. Domingo, having all his wants amply provided for. The Dominicans resolved to send their advocate; and found two or three pious persons from whom they

contrived to procure the wherewithal for his voyage. Father Antonio, as might have been expected, was the monk chosen by the Dominicans to represent them.<sup>1</sup>

When the letters from the authorities of St. Domingo, complaining of the contumacious conduct of the Dominicans, reached the King, he sent for the head of their order in Spain, and made much complaint to him of the scandal which had been occasioned in the colony by this preaching. Not long afterwards came the agents from the principal parties themselves; Father Antonio on behalf of the Dominicans, and Father Alonso on behalf of the colonists. The latter was well received by people in authority, had free access to the King, and was much favoured by him. Father Antonio, on the contrary, was little befriended, found the doors of the presence chamber generally closed against him, and the ushers very peremptory. At last one day, after an ineffectual attempt to persuade some porter, or doorkeeper, to admit him to the royal presence, he watched an opportunity while the porter was speaking to some one else, made a bold rush at the door, passed the obstacle, and found himself at once in the royal presence, supplicating for an audience. The King spoke kindly to him; and in reply to his request to be heard, answered thus: "Say, Father, what you will." Father Antonio, accordingly, produced his papers, and began to make his statement. In the course of it, as an illustration of the cruelty of the Spaniards towards the Indians, he mentioned that some Spaniards standing together joking, near a river, one of them took up a little Indian child, of one or two years old, and merely for the amusement of the thing, threw it over the heads of the others into the water. He was heard to say, as he turned back and saw the little creature rising once or twice to the surface, "You boil up, little wretch, do you?" (*Bullis, cuerpo de tal, bullis.*)

No one, I believe, has ever supposed King Ferdinand

<sup>1</sup> [It will be remembered that the Dominicans in Europe worked the machinery of the Inquisition with fiery and relentless vigour; in the Indies they were the protectors of the weak and defenceless Indians. Whether their action in the colonies was due to a wise and noble pity, or to jealousy of the Franciscans, will be decided by each reader according to knowledge and bent of mind. In 1516, the Dominicans had three monasteries in the Indies containing one hundred monks.]

to be a cruel man; and I should think he would have had an especial dislike to wanton cruelty—to any waste of wickedness. On hearing this story, he exclaimed, "Is this possible?" "Not only possible, but necessary," replied the Father, "for so the thing happened, and cannot (now) be left to be done."<sup>1</sup> He meant, I suppose, that it had the necessity incident to a past transaction, of having been what it was. Then the monk went on to say, "Did your Highness command such things? I am sure you did not." "No, by God, nor ever in my life," replied Ferdinand. Father Antonio then resumed the reading of his statement; and the King, after having heard it all, declared that he would give orders for the matter to be looked to immediately and with diligence. Upon that the monk rose, and having kissed the King's hands, left the royal presence

<sup>1</sup> "Antes es necessario por que pasó así y no puede dejar de ser hecho."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 380.

[With this may be coupled another story, related to M. de Chièvres, by the Dominican Fathers in 1516:—"Certain Spaniards saw an Indian woman holding a crying child in her arms; because a dog they had with them was hungry, they took the living child from the mother's arms and threw it to the dog, which tore it to pieces in the presence of the mother. Of such deeds not ten nor twenty happened, but so many that it is not possible to relate them." There is quite an *embarras de richesse* of these national stories. Ovando had a cook, "a crack-brained fellow, who had twenty or thirty Indians, in place of mules, to carry the kitchen appointments; if one of them happened to irritate him, he laid hold of his knife and cut off his head, and this was their ordinary punishment. If asked about it, he would reply that he had only given the fellow a little buffet, so that it became a saying in the island, 'God keep you from So-and-so's little buffets'—we do not know his name." Again,—“When some of our men carried off captive some recently delivered women, only because the infants cried they took them by the legs and beat them against rocks or threw them from hills, so that they were killed.” The Fathers add some remarks on the rapid depopulation of Española. After explaining that only very young children and very old people were left in the villages, they write, “thus it always happened that when the Indians returned to their villages to rest, they found all the children dead; and if any mother, out of love for her infant, carried it with her to her work to tend it, the miner made her life so hard, because she would not be able to do as much as he required, that the mother was compelled to leave the child to die of hunger, not being able to bear the bitter cruelties exercised on her because she gave care and affection to her child.”—*Col. de Doc. Ind.* . . . *del Real Archivo de Indias*, vii, p. 397.]

with the consciousness that he had amply justified his boldness.

The King was true to his word, and lost no time in summoning a Junta to consider the matter which Father Antonio had urged upon him. The Junta was formed partly of persons belonging to the King's council, and partly of unofficial persons, chiefly theologians. This mode of forming a Junta seems to afford a feasible means of getting work well done for a government; and the union of those who had official experience, and who would have official responsibility, with those who were supposed to be peculiarly cognizant of the principles upon which the legislation in the particular case should proceed, appears to have been a very happy device. I cannot say, however, that this Junta showed any great sagacity in dealing with the matter in hand, though, I dare say, their intelligence respecting it was, at the least, not below that of the principal men of their age and country.

The historian Herrera says, that the Junta first considered the question on the ground that the Indians were not free men; but that afterwards Ferdinand re-submitted it to them, ordering them to take as their basis the words of the late Queen's will respecting the Indians. It may have been so; but I find nothing to support this statement; and am inclined to think that the following account, which is that of Las Casas, is the true one.

He does not speak of any interference on the part of the King with the powers of the Junta; but merely says that, after having had many conferences and heard evidence on both sides, they came to a decision, which may be summed up thus—That the Indians were free men; that they ought to be instructed in the Christian Faith; that they might be ordered to work, but so that their working should not hinder their conversion, and should be such as they could endure; that they should have cottages and lands of their own, and time to work for themselves; that they should be made to hold communication with the Christians; and that they should receive wages, not paid in money, but in clothes and in furniture for their cottages.

These propositions being put in due form, were given

to the King as the answer of the Junta. It was signed by Bishop Fonseca, who had, from the first, been the person principally charged with the management of Indian affairs, by Doctor Palacios Rubios,<sup>1</sup> a learned jurist and writer of those days, by the Licentiates Santiago, de Sosa, and Gregorio, and by Thomas Duran, Peter de Covarrubias and Mathias de Paz, who were monks. Several of these persons, at a future period, when they came to understand the question better, favoured the Indians more; and it appears that, even at this time, one of them, Mathias de Paz, was not satisfied with the decision of the Junta, for he wrote a work, the substance of which was, that the King could not give *encomiendas* without the Pope's permission, declaring all that had hitherto been done in this matter illegal.

We may be sure that Father Antonio was not idle during this period. He was still much discountenanced by people in authority, while his opponent, Father Alonso, the Franciscan, had free access to the Junta, and was made aware of its views and proceedings. The agents for the colonists were very active, and no doubt furnished much evidence to show that the Indians were idle, that they had no good polity amongst them, that they shunned the Christians, and, in fine, that if they were not to be savages, they must be slaves. Meanwhile, Father Antonio, who felt he could answer all these statements, must have grieved exceedingly at not being able to obtain a sufficient hearing. At last he resolved upon what will appear a very bold undertaking: he determined to convince his especial adversary, the Franciscan; so, waylaying him as he came out of some monastery of his order in Burgos, Father Antonio told Father Alonso that he wished to speak to him, and thus commenced his address. "Have you anything to take out of this life with you but that ragged robe, full of filthy insects, which you carry on your shoulders?" This does not

<sup>1</sup> [The editor of the *Col. de Doc. Ined. . . . del Real Archivo de Indias* says that Doctor Palacios Rubios was sent to the West Indies shortly after the first discovery, with orders to write a book on the best system of government for the colonies. On his return, in 1498, he drew up "a long and luminous report in Latin," which still exists in manuscript.]

seem a winning mode of address to begin with; but Father Antonio showed more skill in the course of the conversation than would appear probable from the outset. He told the Franciscan that other men were but using him as a tool; that he was perilling the reward of a life of sanctity in a matter which could not possibly benefit him; that he was doing the Devil's work, without being paid for it even in the Devil's wages. He spoke to him touchingly upon the treatment of the Indians, and appealed to his own experience as regarded the inhumanity he had witnessed. And, strange to say, the conversation between the two monks ended in the Franciscan being entirely gained over by the Dominican, and putting himself under his guidance; so that he afterwards gave him information as to what occurred in the Junta, which enabled Father Antonio to shape the case for the Indians more skilfully. The colonists, therefore, did not gain much by their spiritual ambassador: their lay representatives, however, equally implicated in the result with themselves, were staunch and busy.

On receiving the answer from the Junta, the King's ministers requested the Junta to draw up a body of laws in conformity with the principles which they had affirmed in their decision; but this the Junta were unwilling to do, saying that they had laid down the basis for legislation, and that, with respect to the particular laws which would be requisite, they had only to observe that the more closely such laws could be adapted to this basis the better. Such, at least, was the line taken by the unofficial members of the Junta.

Meanwhile, whether on account of the solicitations of Father Antonio, or on account of the book of Father Mathias, which I imagine was published at this time, the King does not appear to have been satisfied with the principles laid down by the Junta, or at any rate, he was willing that the question should be further considered; for he asked an opinion in writing from the Licentiate Gregorio, who was one of the Junta, and also from Bernardo de Mesa, both of them king's preachers.

It must be noticed that the decision of the Junta, though not expressly mentioning the words *repartimiento*,

or *encomienda*, is in substance built upon the reasons which had led to the establishment of these forms of servitude in Ovando's time.

The opinion which Bernardo de Mesa laid before the King was to the following effect:—That especial heed should be taken to convert the Indians; that they were not slaves, but vassals; that, for "their own good," they must be ruled in some manner of servitude; that they had nothing but personal services to give; that idleness is the mother of all evil; that, finally, the Indians might be given in *encomienda*—but not to every Spaniard, only to those who were of good conscience and customs, and who, besides employing the Indians who should be allotted to them, would instruct them in matters of the Faith. If the Indians, he said, were to remain under their Caciques, how could they learn the Faith? But while he concluded that it would be right to give the Indians in *encomienda*, he was for their being well treated, and for their having regulated tasks allotted to them.

•Bernardo de Mesa's opinion is in general well expressed and well reasoned, that is, according to his erroneous facts and limited experience; but there is one dictum of his, which those of us who are islanders may be inclined to question. He says, that it would be contradicting the goodness of God to assert that the Indians were not fit to receive the Christian Faith; but that to maintain them in it and to teach them good customs, would be a matter of great labour, for, as an insular people, they naturally have less constancy, by reason of the moon being the mistress of the waters.<sup>1</sup>

The above seems too gross a folly to do anything but laugh at; yet opinions grounded on little better reason, and empty phrases thrown prettily together, and words far too big for the occasion (so that in the vacant spaces there is ample room for combustibles), are the things which, in all times, have to be translated into various

<sup>1</sup> "Their nature does not tend towards perseverance in goodness, because being Islanders they have naturally less constancy because the moon is mistress of the waters in the midst of which Islanders dwell."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 395. [All over the world, east and west, the moon has always been held to have a ruling influence over waters, rains, floods, etc.]



## THE LAWS OF BURGOS DRAWN UP 185

kinds of misery and ruin. A mist of foolish words comes down sometimes, now as then, in a rain of blood.<sup>1</sup>

The other preacher was of the same mind as Bernardo de Mesa, but carried his conclusions further; for he maintained that the King might justly inflict slavery upon the Indians for their idolatry—especially such a qualified slavery as that proposed.

The opinion of the King's preachers coinciding with that of the Junta, it was adopted by the King; and nothing remained but to carry it into execution. A set of laws was, therefore, drawn up by certain members of the King's Council, appointed for that purpose, taking as their basis, that the system of *encomiendas* was to be retained.

In their preamble these legislators pronounce upon the indolence and depravity of the Indians; and declare that the best thing which can be done at present, is to break up the Indian settlements and to place the Indians in the neighbourhood of the Spaniards: that thus both in body and mind the aborigines will be well cared for.

The laws were to the following effect:—

The Indians were first to be brought amongst the Spaniards; all gentle means being used towards the Caciques, to persuade them to come willingly. Then, for every fifty Indians, four *bokios* (large huts) should be made by their masters. The *bokios* were to be thirty feet in length by fifteen in breadth. Three thousand *montones* (the hillocks which were used to preserve the plants from too much moisture<sup>2</sup>) of *yuca*, of which they made the cassava bread, two thousand *montones* of yams, with a certain space for growing pimento, and a certain number of fowls, were to be assigned for the living of these fifty Indians.

Every Spaniard who had an *encomienda* of Indians was to make some sort of building, however rude, for a chapel; and in it were to be placed an image of the Virgin Mary,

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1848.

<sup>2</sup> The Indians planted their potatoes, also, upon hillocks—a circumstance which may be worth heeding in the present times: "Each hillock is eight or nine feet round and the edges of one touch or nearly touch the next; the top is flat or nearly so and the height that to the knee or a little more."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 7, cap. 2. See also cap. 4.

and a bell. Prayers were to be read morning and evening—the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, the Credo and the Salve Regina. Besides this chapel for each *encomienda*, there was to be built a church for the general neighbourhood in which mass was to be said.

By these laws it was settled that the Indians appointed to work at the mines were to stay there five months; then they were to have forty days for holidays, in which time, however, they were to till their own lands; then they were to go to the mines for another five months. Certain regulations follow about the food to be given to the Indians working at the mines, or on the Spanish farms. Las Casas grows furious in condemning the quantity and quality of this food as being utterly inadequate. Amongst other arrangements, certain little fishes called sardines were ordered to be eaten on fast-days. Such an order, as Las Casas says, was ridiculous; for men employed in such labours as the Indians were, would have no time for fishing, and it would have been impossible to bring a sufficient supply of fish from Spain and to convey it into the interior of Hispaniola.

The employment of the Indians in the mines is not only encouraged but insisted upon; for it is ordered that a third part of each *encomienda*, or if the owner should wish it, more than a third part, should be so employed. Those Spaniards who were very distant from the mines (one hundred leagues, for instance,) were not to be bound by this law. They might, however, be in partnership with those of their countrymen who lived near the mines. And in practice it came to this: that those who lived near the mines furnished provisions, and those who lived far off brought Indians; so that this exception to the law only added to the misery of the natives.

With regard to the wages, it was ordered that one peso of gold should be given annually to each Indian, to provide clothes with.

Then there was a law in favour of women with child.

Then followed a law which might have led to important results, but little good came of it. It was, that visitors should be appointed, two for each Spanish settlement; but these visitors were permitted to have *encomiendas*:

and therefore it was hardly to be expected that their proceedings should be considerate, or even impartial.

The Indian dances were forbidden.

The regulations respecting the Caciques were, that they should have a certain number of their Indians set apart for their service (never to exceed six), and that the Cacique and his attendants were to go to whatever Spaniard had the greatest number of that Indian Prince's tribe allotted to him. The Cacique and his servants were not, however, to be idle, but were to be employed in easy and light services. These poor Caciques! What a fall in life for them: to descend from governing a people (which they had done after their fashion, and not so badly,) to some such occupation as looking after fowls!

The above laws were promulgated at Burgos, on the 27th of December 1512, and have ever since been called the Laws of Burgos. Much cannot be said in praise of their justice, wisdom, or humanity.<sup>1</sup>

The reader may recollect that King Ferdinand, on receiving the complaints from the official persons of St. Domingo against the Dominican monks, sent for the Provincial of that order, and spoke to him about the sermons of Father Antonio, blaming them exceedingly. The Provincial, on his part, wrote to Pedro de Cordova, the head of the Dominicans in Hispaniola; and in consequence of that communication from his Superior, or wishing to aid Father Antonio by his presence, Pedro de Cordova came over to Spain, and presented himself at court. He was a person of great repute and authority; and when he had read these laws of Burgos, and had expressed to the King his dissatisfaction with them, Ferdinand said to him,

<sup>1</sup> [An ordinance was also issued on the subject of the fresh *repartimiento* to be made. It was to the effect that the King, being informed that the Spanish population of Española was daily increasing, and that most of the first settlers and the new arrivals had not enough Indians, while a few had many more than a fair proportion, he orders that on no excuse is any one, either private individual or public official, to hold in future more than 300 Indians, and that this order was to apply to all the colonial possessions. *Col. de Doc. Ined. . . . del Archivo de Indias*, i, p. 237.]

"Take upon yourself, then, Father, the charge of remedying them; you will do me a great service therein; and I will order that what you decide upon shall be adopted." "It is not my profession to meddle in so arduous a matter," the Vicar replied: "I beseech your Highness, do not command me." And so passed away one of the greatest opportunities of doing good that any man ever had. Those who have taken up a great cause must sacrifice even their reserve and their humility to it—often, perhaps, the hardest thing for a good man to do. And, with regard to responsibility, he who is not prepared to take all the responsibility that may come of his moving in any matter, has some difficulty to justify his moving in it at all. Any one, however, who is cognizant of these times, will be desirous to say as little as possible against Pedro de Cordova, who was a very good man, and, on all other occasions, a devoted friend to the Indians.

As Pedro de Cordova would not take the arrangement of the Indian laws upon himself, the King summoned another Junta with two new theologians in it, to see if the laws could be ameliorated. Pedro de Cordova assisted at this Council; but did not succeed in doing much, though all, that was then determined, proved to be of very good tendency, and entirely in accordance with his views.

This Junta, in their report, suggested certain additions to the laws of Burgos: namely, that married women should not be compelled to go and serve with their husbands in the mines or on the farms; that boys and girls under fourteen years of age should not be employed in hard work, but only in matters of household service; and that, until their coming of full age, they should be entrusted to their parents or to appointed guardians.

This Junta also recommended that the unmarried Indian women should work in the company of their parents; and that the laws which applied to the clothing of men should apply to that of women also.

The above suggestions, all of which have for their object the cultivation of family ties and of decorum, are good as far as they go, and deserve to be commended. In the course of this report there is a sentence, added probably by the Dominican Vicar, or on his remonstrances, which

is important in principle, to the effect that if the Indians were to become civilised, they should then be allowed to live by themselves.<sup>1</sup> However, as Las Casas justly declares, if these people had lived to the Day of Judgment, they never would have got their liberty in this way.<sup>2</sup>

The Junta concluded by informing his Highness that, these additions being made to the laws of Burgos, "his royal conscience would be entirely discharged," and Las Casas observes, with some justice, "It is delightful to see how free the King remained from the sins which were committed in the perdition of those people" (the Indians).

The summoning of these Juntas is the first occasion of the grievances of the Indians being brought before the court of Spain in a public manner; and the laws of Burgos are the first attempt at legislation to remove such grievances. We may naturally make a pause here in the narrative, and pass in review the main events and circumstances of the history up to this time.

At the time of passing these laws of Burgos, nearly a century had elapsed since Prince Henry of Portugal, suddenly resolving upon his first expedition of discovery, sent out two gentlemen of his household to get beyond Cape Nam if they could, and to do what mischief to the Moors might come in their way. Since then, how changed and how enlarged a world it had become! The whole coast line of Africa had been followed out, and the way by sea to India ascertained; the Atlantic had been crossed; the most important of the West India islands, Hispaniola, Cuba and Jamaica, had been discovered; nor was the continent of America unknown, though the margin only of a small part of it was yet beginning to be colonized. Navigation, instead

<sup>1</sup> "That because with time and communication with Christians they might become capable of governing themselves they should in that case have liberty to do so."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> These Juntas seem to have entirely failed in appreciating the gist of the subject submitted to them. As LAS CASAS says, they did not foresee that there must be a burrow near the spot where the hare always takes refuge (*no sintieron la madriguera donde se acogia la Liebre*), meaning that they did not perceive the consequences of things.

of being the childish, timid thing it was in the first instance, had sprung up at once into full manhood; and mariners now lost sight of land altogether, and yet went to sleep as fearless as if they were in their own ports. Europe had become acquainted with new plants, new animals, new trees, new men; and these new things and creatures will not remain mere curiosities for the Old World; but will henceforth be mixed up with its policy, its wars, its daily and domestic habits, and become part of its nearest anxieties. The finances of great nations and the sustenance of numerous people will depend upon plants which the Spanish discoverers of this century were just beginning to notice, and were speaking of with an indifference which seems almost wonderful to us who know what a large part these things are hereafter to play in the commodities of European life.

As regards the civil history of these new climes of Africa and America, much had already taken place in the course of this first century of modern discovery, which determines, if we may say so, the fate of millions of people to come. Already a slave trade had been established in Africa; already had the first instance taken place of colonists destroying aborigines (an example hereafter to be so frequently followed); already had the peculiar difficulties attendant upon modern colonization begun to be felt, and the first beginnings been made of state papers, fearful to think of, from their number and extent, to regulate the relations between the colony, the mother-country, and the original inhabitants.

Nor, in other departments, besides those of conquest and colonization, had the European men of this century been idle. They had invented printing—about the same time that they introduced a negro slave trade; opponents which were destined to have a deadly battle for many generations. Literature had maintained its revival. Art may be said to have culminated in a century which possessed a Leonardo da Vinci, a Michael Angelo, a Raffaele, and a Titian. The science of international politics had begun, for it was during this period that

the policy of European nations became something like what it is now, so that we feel as if we were immediately related to the men of that day, though if we step back a few years in history, men then seem ancients to us. Taking it altogether, this particular hundred years will only yield as yet to one other century in the annals of the world.

There is never wanting, however, the slave to sit in the triumphal chariot, and to remind the conqueror that he is, after all, but a poor mortal. And when, with some knowledge of what has taken place since, we look over the proceedings of this century (especially as regards the discoveries and conquests with which we are at present concerned) we almost feel as if nothing had been gained for humanity, so large are the drawbacks. Not that I can believe that the world goes on toiling, and suffering, and aspiring,—yet gaining nothing; or that we are to conclude, that the conquests and discoveries of this century were not a furtherance of the intelligence and the worth of mankind. But Ignorance and Evil, even in full flight, deal terrible back-handed strokes upon their pursuers.

In the very case before us, in this discovery of the Indies, what do we find? From want of understanding their fellow-men, from want of comprehending what should be the first objects of colonization, these early discoverers were doing what they could to produce a displacement of human life which will be very mischievous to as remote a period in the history of the world as we can at all presume to foresee. It is probable that no considerable changes take place even in insect life without affecting us—it may be largely: and what must we expect from abrupt extinctions and introductions of races of mankind in any country; which are so many shocks, as it were, to social nature? What, but troubles and disasters of the direst kind? And such they have proved to be; large in themselves, prolific in their nature, and of vast extent in their operation.

To bring the above remarks closely home to the present subject, keeping within the bounds of what has already been related, let us take the case of Hispaniola, and we

shall see that the circumstances under which that island was occupied, were as unfavourable to human life as can well be imagined. The conquered people were employed in a manner alien from all their former pursuits, habits, and enjoyments. They worked for the production of commodities which had no interest in their eyes. They were hurried off to the mines without any suitable provision being made for a great movement of population. Nothing, in such a mode of government, had time to grow. It was not, as in older and settled countries, a surplus part of the adventurous youth that was attracted to a severe, but gainful, occupation; but the most stable and precious part of the community, such as fathers of families, was suddenly demanded for a kind of labour for which it had received no previous training, and in the profits of which it had no concern. It would have been contrary to all the laws by which life is regulated, if such a mode of proceeding had been otherwise than most fatal to the people amongst whom it was introduced. They died, as they must have died, by thousands; and the mode of supplying this vacuum was equally contradictory to the laws of nature.<sup>1</sup>

In a limited space, like that of an island, we are able to trace clearly the results of this outrageous and barbarous statesmanship; and we must be prepared, in the course of the narrative, to watch the gradual extinction of the Indian inhabitants of the various West India islands, just as we might observe the extinction of so many lights which there was not air enough to support, and which die out from sheer inanition.<sup>2</sup> Such is the unwelcome but manifest conclusion which follows from our first general consideration of the various events that have already been recorded in the history of Spanish America.

<sup>1</sup> [An anonymous memorial to Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, therefore of about 1517 or 1518, and perhaps of Las Casas, says that the native population of Española had been reduced from a million to fifteen or sixteen thousand people. See also *post*, Bk. viii, chap. i.]

<sup>2</sup> Knowing the fate of these Indian nations, I have been anxious to put on record any Indian names that occur, so that the ethnologist may have before him the few words that are left of their languages, which may furnish some slight clue to the genealogy of these destroyed races.



# BOOK V

## OJEDA AND NICUESA

### CHAPTER I

NATURE AND CUSTOMS OF THE INDIANS—MINOR VOYAGES—  
OJEDA AND NICUESA START ON THEIR VOYAGE—OJEDA'S  
MISFORTUNES—HIS DEATH

**T**HE course of history is like that of a great river wandering through various countries; now, in the infancy of its current, collecting its waters from obscure small springs in plashy meadows, and from unconsidered rivulets which the neighbouring rustics do not know the names of; now, in its boisterous youth, forcing its way through mountains; now, in middle life, flowing with equable current busily by great towns, its waters sullied, yet enriched, with commerce; and now, in its burdened old age, making its slow and difficult way with an ever-widening expanse of waters, over which the declining sun looms grandly, to the sea. The uninstructed or careless traveller generally finds but one form of beauty or of meaning in the river or upon its banks. The romantic gorge or wild cascade is perhaps the only kind of scenery which delights him. And so it has often been in our estimate of history. Well-fought battles, or the doings of gay courts, or bloody revolution, have been the chief sources of attraction; while less adorned events, but not of less real interest or import, have often escaped our notice altogether.

In order to gain some of that interest in the present subject which would arise from better knowledge of the persons principally concerned, it is desirable to endeavour

to understand the nature of the Indian people, on whose fate this narrative mainly turns—a fate which has perhaps had as much effect upon the world as that of any of the most distinguished races.

It is a very difficult thing for one people to understand another, even if they are of the same age as a nation and equally advanced in civilization; still more difficult is it for a partially civilized people to appreciate a people living comparatively in a state of nature. And as this was the relation between the Spaniards and many nations of the Indians, we must translate, as it were, with much circumspection, the accounts which the conquerors give of the conquered into our own reading of the matter. We see in this day, that civilized people of the same race, religion, habits, manners, and language, often misunderstand each other utterly. Imagine, then, how great must be the chance of false interpretation, when men of different races talk together in language most imperfectly understood, eked out by signs, about subjects upon which they have scarcely any common ideas!

And then, too, there is that tyrannous desire for uniformity which confounds the judgment of men when they are commenting upon each other individually; so that you often find that a long criticism upon a man, or his work, is but a demand that he should be somebody else, and his work somebody else's work. And nations make the same foolish comments upon each other that individual men do. What a world it would have been, if a man had been listened to in the making of it! One or two kinds of trees, a few flowers of the form and colour which pleased him, and happened to suit the exact spot where he was standing, and one species of mankind—his own,—would have filled up, handsomely, as he would think, his formal village world. But great rich Nature, apparently unreckoning, almost reckless, in her affluence, though we know all the time how bound she is to weight and number, smiles with every variety and inequality of form and colour, of life and desire, of character and conduct.

Having thus put in some plea for diversity of nature amongst men, I will endeavour to give the reader some

notion of the Indians, not supporting my views by exact and formal references, but simply giving such a description of the Indians as a traveller might have done who had just come from those parts of the world, and was asked what were his general impressions of the people he had been staying amongst.

In the first place, the outward appearance of the Indians was prepossessing: they had a mild expression of countenance, a gentle smile, a beautiful form, with good complexion and softness of body, and a general gracefulness of movement.

In many parts of America, the manners, and perhaps the whole aspect, of the people would have given a traveller the notion of persons of decayed fortune, who had once been more prosperous and formidable than they were now, or who had been the off-shoot of a more defined and forcible people. These nations had probably travelled much, whether they had come from Judæa or Phœnicia (as some have said), or, as I should say was most probable—if called upon to pronounce some opinion on the matter—from Eastern Asia and the adjacent islands. The rumour of a deluge was largely current in some parts of the Indies. Then the singular correspondence, in point of length, of the Mexican year  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, with that of the Egyptians, the five complementary days, corresponding to the epagomena of the Memphian year, the resemblance of the Teocalli, or god-houses, to the temple of Jupiter Belus, with many other strange resemblances in rites and modes of thought and expression, almost compel us to give a common origin to these nations of the New World and to the eastern nations of the Old World.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Such, I imagine, would be the conclusion of Humboldt, from whom I gain these particulars, but who is very careful of pronouncing any judgment, as, indeed, large investigation in these doubtful matters makes men careful of coming to any conclusion. [There is a whole library of literature on the origin and the religions of the races of America, and the stages of civil and political development reached by them; it may be said that no two writers agree in the main in their views. A synopsis of the subject will be found in Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America* (ii), Mr Winsor, himself, hopelessly concluding, "On the whole, a double compliance is better than

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In some of the Indian tribes things were to be found which reminded the traveller of the highest products and the highest thoughts of civilization. Hieroglyphics, statues, carvings, pictures, works of metal, and delicate fabrics of cotton, attest this. Various kinds of bread were to be seen among them, and not unskilful modes of cultivation. In dances and in songs they excelled. Moreover, some of the most elevating and some of the most subtle and far-fetched notions that have ever entered into the minds of men, were to be found domesticated amongst the Indians. Thus prayer, prophecy, monastic life, the confession of sin to appointed confessors, the immortality of the soul, and hopes of a future state of bliss, belief in witchcraft, and the propitiation of idols by living sacrifices—the deepest thoughts and the wildest superstitions—were not unknown in the New World.

In order to bring home more clearly to the mind of the reader what kind of mental civilization the Indians had, when they were civilized, I cannot do better than give an account of two prayers that remain to us, which were in use among the Mexicans. The one was used after a kind of auricular confession, which, however, it appears, occurred only once in a lifetime.

After the penitent had confessed his sins to the satrap, the satrap addressed the god Tezcatlipuk in this fashion: "Our Lord most gracious, the defender and favourer of all; you have just heard the confession of this poor sinner, in which he has made known in your presence his rottenness and filthiness." The satrap then went on to say, in words which I shall abridge, that the sinner might have concealed some of his sins, in which case dire will be his punishment; but perchance he has spoken the whole truth, and now feels "dolour and discontent" for all that is past, and firm resolve never to sin more. Then the satrap<sup>1</sup> said, "I speak in presence of your Majesty, who dogmatism; it is one thing to lose one's way in this labyrinth or belief, and another to lose one's head." The latest, and perhaps fullest, information will be obtained from Mr. E. J. Payne's *History of the New World called America*.]

<sup>1</sup> I keep the word "satrap," as it is used in the original, and may give a clue to the Mexican word which it represents. "Satrap," in the middle ages, had a signification it has since lost. "Chartam

knowest all things, and knowest that this poor wretch did not sin with entire liberty of free will, but was helped and inclined to it by the natural condition of the sign under which he was born. And since it is so, O most gracious Lord, defender and favourer of all men, even if this poor man has grievously offended against you, peradventure will you not cause your anger and your indignation to depart from him?" Continuing in this strain, the satrap besought pardon and remission of sins, "a thing which descends from heaven as clearest and purest water," with which "your Majesty," he said, "washes away and purifies all the stains and filthiness which sins cause in the soul" (*todas las manchas, y suciedades, que los pecados causan en el anima*).

Then the satrap addressed the penitent, and told him that he had come to a place of much danger and labour and dread, where there is a ravine from which no one who had once fallen in, could make his escape; also, he had come to a place where snares and nets are set one with another, and one over against another. All this is said metaphorically of the world and of sin. The satrap proceeded to speak of the judgment to come in another world, and of the lake of miseries and intolerable torments. "But now, here you are," he said to the penitent, "and the time is arrived in which you have had pity on yourself to speak with our Lord, who sees the secrets of hearts." And then the satrap told the penitent there was a new birth for him, but he must look to his ways well, and see that he sinned no more. Finally, he must cleanse his house<sup>1</sup> and himself, and seek a slave to sacrifice

*Æthelredi Regis Angl. post Duces subscribunt aliquot viri nobiles, cum hoc titulo, Satrapa Regis. Quæ appellatio eadem est forte quæ Ministri. Vidé in hac voce. (S. BERNARDUS de Consid. lib. 4. Quid illud sit diccam, et non proderit. Cur? quia non placebit Satrapis, plus majestati quam veritati faventibus.)*—DUCANGE, *Gloss*. "Satrapa."

<sup>1</sup> In reference to this cleansing of the house, the exhortation is as follows:—"Carefully cleanse and preserve thy house, and thou wilt often meet that most gracious youth who ever goes through our houses, and through our districts, comforting and recreating, and works, seeking his friends to console them, and be consoled with them." This is said entirely in a spiritual sense, for the prayer has just declared that God is "invisible and impalpable."—AGLIO, *Antiquities of Mexico*. KINGSBOROUGH'S *Collection*, v, p. 370.

before God (there is the blot on the whole proceeding), and he must work a year or more in the house of God, and undergo penitential exercises, piercing his tongue for the injurious words it had uttered; and he must give in charity even to the depriving of himself of sustenance: "for look," said the satrap, speaking of the poor, "their flesh is as thy flesh, and they are men as thou art, especially the sick, for they are the image of God. There is no more to say to thee; go in peace; and I pray God that he may help thee to perform that which thou art bound to do, for he is gracious to all men."<sup>1</sup>

The next prayer is that of a king, or governor, upon his election, in which, after celebrating the greatness of God (this also is addressed to Tezcatlipuk), and debasing himself before Him, saying that he deserves blindness of his eyes and crushing of his body (a confession which many rulers might make after they have had the government), he goes on to say, that he it is who requires to be governed, and that the Lord must know many to whom he could confide this charge of government; but since "you are determined," he says, "to put me forward as an object of scandal and laughter for the world, let your will be done. Peradventure," he exclaims, "you do not know who I am. After that you know what person I am, you will seek another, depriving me of the government, being weary of enduring me. Perchance," he adds, "it is a dream, or as when one rises from his bed in his sleep, this thing which has happened to me." The prayer then proceeds, as the prayer of a ruler naturally would do, against war and against pestilence, and speaks of former rulers, and, if I understand it rightly, of their joys and privileges in heaven; and then he comes to speak of his own inferiority, how he has no possibility of ruling himself, how he is in darkness, how he is a heap of refuse in a corner. "Be gracious, therefore, O Lord," he exclaims, "and give me a little light, if it be no more than so much as a glow-worm, which moves by night, throws out from itself, that I may find my way in this dream and this sleep of life, which lasts as a day, where there are many

<sup>1</sup> KINGSBOROUGH'S *Collection*, v, p. 371.

occasions for stumbling, and many things to give occasion for laughter, and other things that are as a rugged road, which have to be passed by leaping." <sup>1</sup>

He concludes by saying, "Our Lord most gracious, you have made me sit in your seat and be your instrument of voice (*vuestra flauta*)" <sup>2</sup> without any desert of my own"; and afterwards he adds, "Although I am a poor creature, I wish to say that unworthily I am your image, and represent your person, and the words which I shall speak have to be held as your words, and my countenance to be esteemed as your countenance, and my hearing as your hearing, and the punishments that I shall ordain have to be considered as if you ordained them; wherefore, I pray you, put within me your spirit and your words, that all may obey, and that none may be able to contradict." <sup>3</sup>

After reading such prayers as the above, which at any rate have some grandeur in them, it is impossible to help smiling when some Spanish narrator, who has been commenting upon the folly and idolatry of the Indians, shows himself to be anything but free from superstition, relating a story, perhaps, how an evil spirit who was kept in durance by an English monk, promised, if released, to give him figs at Christmas, and accordingly brought figs from the

<sup>1</sup> KINGSBOROUGH'S *Coll.*, v, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> The force of this expression will be understood when an account is given of Tezcatlipuk's festival, in which a flute was sounded at certain intervals.

<sup>3</sup> A doubt will occur to many minds as to how these long prayers were retained in the memory of the Mexicans, whose means of writing with exactitude were, comparatively speaking, limited. The same doubts occurred to the celebrated Acosta three hundred years ago, and he expressed it to one who was able to satisfy him. In the original manuscript of Juan de Tovar, possessed by Sir Thomas Phillips, Bart., of Middle Hill, the letter of Acosta and the answer of Tovar are given. "But to preserve the utterances of their orators and poets the principal youths, who were to be in their turn priests and officials, were each day exercised in them in the schools so that by continued repetition these things were remembered without the discrepancy of a word. The most famous declamations handed down from former times were taught to those youths whose public duties would necessitate their use, and in this way many harangues were preserved from generation to generation without the loss of a word until the Spaniards came; the Spaniards took down many speeches and recitations in writing, as I have seen, and so they have been preserved."—JUAN DE TOVAR, *Historia de los Indios Mexicanos*, MS.

Indies at that time, for which the evil spirit received his liberty.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the moral qualities of the Indians, I think it may be said that they were less treacherous than most other uncultivated people. Of their valour, or the want of it, it is difficult to speak, because it is almost impossible to estimate duly the advantages which their conquerors, the Spaniards, possessed in having fire-arms, horses, and discipline. Individual instances of the most determined bravery on the part of the Indians are frequent in the early histories of their conquerors. The Spaniards are wont to speak of the idleness of the Indians; but what alacrity could be expected from any man who, under a tropical sun, is employed in gathering gold for other people?<sup>2</sup>

Another complaint often urged against the Indians for the first sixty or seventy years after the discovery of America, was that it was impossible to make them live in polity. This was an ill-founded complaint. The Indians hated the polity of the Spaniards, and very justly so, considering the expounders of this polity whom they encountered. But succeeding events, and indeed contemporaneous ones, showed that the Indians were a docile people, and could adopt with all reasonable readiness the religion and polity which the Spaniards were desirous of impressing upon them.

I do not pretend that all the traces of cultivation I have mentioned were to be found in any one tribe or nation of Indians: but looking at them for a moment as one race of men under different circumstances, it is not unfair to bring together the different developments of

<sup>1</sup> See OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, l. 4, c. 2. Madrid, 1851.

<sup>2</sup> The Indians, on the other hand, might well complain of the idleness of the Spaniards. An old Indian of Nicaragua thus addresses BENZONI, who commenced his travels in the Indies in 1541:—"What is a Christian—the Christians? . . . they will not work, they are liars, gamblers, wicked and blasphemous. When they go to church to hear Mass they talk of those who are absent and speak ill of each other.' Finally he concluded that Christians are not good men, and when I told him that it was the wicked ones who did these things, he inquired, 'Then where are the good ones, for as yet I have known none but the wicked.'"—BENZONI, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 2, cap. 16.



this race, for the purpose at least of showing the possibilities which were in it. It is also worthy of remark that those Indians who had, perhaps, the least of what we ordinarily call cultivation, give the idea of having been the most cultivable, while the Mexicans, rich in arts and knowledge of various kinds, were cruel idolaters. In the case of the Indians who lived more simply, such as the aborigines of Cuba, Hispaniola, and the Tierra-firme (near the Isthmus of Darien), the very simplicity of life went far to prevent covetousness; and even where religious rites and ceremonies were least developed, natural religion, in its best form, seems to have prevailed. "They had no form of worship," says Herrera, speaking of the people of the Tierra-firme, "but they held it sinful to kill, to steal, and to commit adultery; and they abhorred lying."<sup>1</sup>

This difference which I have just noticed between the Mexicans and the inhabitants of Cuba, seems to me to pervade great part of the continent, and to make it appear as if there had been two centres from which the development of the various nations in America proceeded, generating two kinds of cultivation. The one was adroit, unimaginative, cruel, and tending to a worship of the outer world. This cultivation culminated in the Mexicans.

Then there was the other, which received its highest development amongst the Peruvians, in whose religion and religious worship a grand simplicity prevailed. It has been noticed, I think, that the favourable view which the first Inca gave of death, by what he said at the approach of his own death, was probably the means of preventing human sacrifices in Peru. Calling his principal people around him, he told them that he intended to return immediately to the heavens, to rest himself with his father, the Sun, who was calling him: and this form of speech was used by all succeeding Incas when they felt themselves to be dying. The worship of the Peruvians was not a mere worship of the sun alone, as of the most beautiful and powerful thing which they beheld; but they had also a worship of a far more refined and elevated nature addressed to Pachacamac, the soul of the universe, whom they hardly dared to name; and when they were

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 3, cap. 5.

obliged to name this Being, they did so inclining the head and the whole body, now lifting up the eyes to heaven, now lowering them to the ground, and giving kisses in the air. To Pachacamac they made no temple and offered no sacrifice; but they adored him in their hearts. Their sacrifices to the sun were rams and sheep, and the produce of the earth; and, as the Romans poured out libations to their gods, so the Peruvians, in sign of adoration to the sun, were wont to throw a drop into the air, and kisses with it.

How different from the formal, elaborate, and bloody sacrifices of the Mexicans!

This difference, which I seem to see throughout the Indian nations, may point to two different races, or may be merely a development in different directions of the same race: and, indeed, if the opinion is sound, that men are all to be traced up to one family, the difference of all races has been produced in this way, namely, by a development of one part of the human character and form, the rest remaining comparatively latent.

One peculiar circumstance, as Humboldt remarks, is very much to be noted in the ancient records and traditions of the Indian nations. In no less than three remarkable instances has superior civilization been attributed to the sudden presence amongst them of persons differing from themselves in appearance and descent.

Bochica, a white man with a beard, appeared to the Mozca Indians in the plains of Bogota, taught them how to build and to sow, formed them into communities, gave an outlet to the waters of the great lake, and, having settled the government civil and ecclesiastical, retired into a monastic state of penitence for two thousand years.

In like manner Manco Capac, accompanied by his sister, Mama Oello, descended amongst the Peruvians, gave them a code of admirable laws, reduced them into communities, and then ascended to his father, the Sun.

Amongst the Mexicans there suddenly appeared Quetzalcohuatl (green-feathered snake),<sup>1</sup> a white and bearded

<sup>1</sup> Green-feathered means eloquent. "Plumage rico y de perfecto

man, of broad brow (*ancha la frente*) dressed in strange dress, a legislator, who recommended severe penances, lacerating his own body with the prickles of the agave and the thorns of the cactus, but who dissuaded his followers from human sacrifice. While he remained in Anahuac, it was a Saturnian reign; but this great legislator, after moving on to the plains of Cholula, and governing the Cholulans with wisdom, passed away to a distant country, and was never heard of more. It is said briefly of him<sup>1</sup> that "he ordained sacrifices of flowers and fruit, and stopped his ears when he was spoken to of war."<sup>2</sup> Such a saint is needed in all times, even in the present advanced state of civilization in the Old World.

I cannot help imagining that somewhat of the same difference which has been pointed out between the two great branches of the Indians, might perhaps be traced in their numerous languages also. The language that first sounded on the ears of Columbus was exquisitely sweet, and so the Indian tongues were found to be in other parts, but the language of the Mexicans is to our apprehension harsh in the extreme. Indeed a language, in which the word for a kiss is *tetennamiquilistli*, can hardly be an inviting one for the "gay science" of troubadours, or for aught that is gentle.

I cannot conclude this brief account of the Indians without adverting to their ancient monuments and ruined cities. Those who wish to study this people must turn to the ruins

color.—Dice se por la oracion elegante ó muy bien compuesta."—KINGSBOROUGH'S *Collection*, vii, p. 181.

[*Quetzalcohuatl* is now supposed to mean "Bird-Serpent," or "Feathered Serpent." He is also thought by some to have been the Apostle St. Thomas.]

<sup>1</sup> HUMBOLDT'S *Researches in America*.

<sup>2</sup> "They say that when wars, murders, and other evils bringing ruin to men, were spoken of before him he faced about elsewhere and stopped his ears, so as neither to see nor hear them."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 6, c. 24.

See also LAS CASAS, *Historia Apologetica*, where the same words with a slight variation are used.—"He faced about and stopped his ears neither to see nor hear."—Cap. 122.

of the temples, or the tombs, at Mitla, Palenque, and Copan; must investigate the primeval remains of buildings to be found on the borders of the vast lake of Titicaca and the adjacent plain of Tiahuaco; must consider well the pyramids of Papantla and Cholula; and still further ponder over the clear signs of an early and considerable civilisation which seems to have existed in a somewhat similar form in places so widely asunder as Canada and the banks of the Orinoco. It has been said that little will be learnt to advance art, or increase our knowledge of beauty, from a study of any American monuments—an assertion which I think is completely contradicted by the Grecques on the temple, or palace, at Mitla, and still more by the recently-discovered ruins of Copan. There is a monument amongst the many remarkable ones brought to light there, which I think is one of the grandest that remains to us, as far as I know, of all antiquity precedent to the Grecian era.<sup>1</sup> This monument is a colossal figure, the head of which greatly resembles that of Napoleon, only that it has that grand mildness and that sedate intelligence which fascinate our attention in the monuments of that mysterious country that is created, if we may say so, by the Nile.

Putting aside, however, all questions of beauty, I have no doubt that it is of the utmost importance that the learned should deeply investigate and consider the ancient monuments of America. I think I foresee a time (if the wiser nations of the earth are not obliged to be too much employed in warring, and so have little energy left for other exertions,) when these and similar researches, which are being undertaken in various parts of the world, will be made to converge to a far larger knowledge of the early records of this earth than has hitherto been obtained, and will thus assist in solving some of the most important questions which exist with respect to the early peopling of the world, the migrations of races, and the capabilities of different races in enduring different climates.

In the narrative we are about to resume, questions of race occupy the foremost place; not only in the cells of the studious, but in the courts of kings and on battle-plains. I have not the slightest doubt, for instance, that

<sup>1</sup> STEPHEN'S *Central America*, i, p. 140.

the account in the Bible of the origin of our first parents and the unity of the human race (which will be found constantly referred to) was the cause of millions of people, whole nations, being maintained upon the earth.

Those Indians whom the Spanish priests and statesmen were able to preserve from the cruelty and recklessness of their countrymen, owed their preservation to this basis of thought, that whatever appearances might say to the contrary, the conquerors and the conquered were originally of one race.

Again, the interest of these ancient stone-written or parchment-painted records of America, is redoubled by the wonderful resemblance, and occasionally the absolute identity, of the Indian traditions with the history in the Bible, of which resemblance the account of the Deluge and of the Tower of Babel are most striking examples.<sup>1</sup> And, in fine, to determine what we must hold to and what we must dismiss in early chronology, is a branch of research that must not be abandoned. Indeed, increased knowledge of the arts of life, of science, and of the nature of man, far from rendering such research of less interest, will only give a deeper meaning to it.

Having said thus much of the nature, customs, religion, and antiquities of the Indians, I resume the general story of the Spanish Conquest, which left off at the publication of the laws of Burgos in favour of the Indians.

Hitherto the narrative has been confined to Hispaniola and the mother country, and has gone chronologically in one direction; but it will be necessary now to turn back to those enterprises<sup>2</sup> which led to the colonization of the

<sup>1</sup> "He," Xelhua, "ordered bricks to be made in the province of Tlamanalco, at the foot of the Sierra of Cocotl, and to convey them to Cholula he placed a file of men, who passed them from hand to hand. The gods beheld with wrath this edifice, the top of which was to reach the clouds. Irritated by the daring attempt of Xelhua, they hurled fire on the pyramid. Numbers of the workmen perished; the works were discontinued, and the monument was afterwards dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air."—HUMBOLDT'S *Researches in America*, i, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> [On 3rd September 1501 the Catholic Kings forbade anyone to undertake a voyage of discovery without the royal licence; the penalty or disobedience was forfeiture of ship and goods.]

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continent of South America,—of the *Tierra-firme*, as it was always called at that time.

The voyages which for this purpose must be examined and recounted, were for the most part disjointed undertakings, often fruitless and discreditable to those engaged in them, and very unsatisfactory and difficult to relate. But they led to great changes in the world. They give a picture of Spanish enterprise during that period, and show it spreading over the New World like water finding its level,—unhappily, however, not in force or quantity enough to form great navigable rivers or deep seas, but merely wide, stagnant, unhealthy marshes. So many of these smaller enterprises were eminently unsuccessful as regards the fortunes of the persons engaged in them, that we may wonder at first at the steady continuance of such undertakings. But who at that time could resist embarking in them? The truth is, life is tedious: we mock at gamblers, and rightly, because the chances are often manifestly against them; but who, except a few cold-blooded philosophers, does not wish to try his fortunes in some adventurous way? Everybody knows well the inconveniences of the state in which he lives, and where he has probably missed the respect, or the love, which he hoped for; and he thinks that at least it will be something gained to have a change of evils.

Then, the notions of the earth which were held at that period were wild, so vague, so tempting. Copernicus<sup>1</sup> had not as yet made known those beginnings of astronomical science which were to reduce, even in the popular imagination, the bounds of the world to their just insignificance. The earth was indefinitely large; there was then an India for everybody to discover; the stars were concerned in the destinies of men; and even wise and prudent persons partook somewhat of the mood of children when deep in the study of fairy-tales, where courage and adventure always come to a good end.

The first discovery of the mainland of America was made by Columbus in the course of his third voyage, in

<sup>1</sup> Copernicus was born in 1473, and died in 1543.

the year 1498.<sup>1</sup> It was at Paria. In the next year, Alonso de Ojeda—having on board that personage who makes a dubious figure in the history of the New World, Amerigo Vespucci,—accomplished a somewhat similar voyage to that of Columbus, having been aided by a knowledge of the Admiral's route.<sup>2</sup> Ojeda, however, touched on a more southerly point than Columbus, somewhere, it is conjectured, on the coast of Surinam,<sup>3</sup> and from thence went northwards to the Gulf of Paria; after that, to Venezuela,<sup>4</sup> which he so named from some similarity of the position and the buildings to those of Venice.<sup>5</sup> The furthest point westward of this voyage was the Cape de la Vela. Vespucci's account of the natives is curious and interesting;<sup>6</sup> and his narrative spreading

<sup>1</sup> This voyage will have, hereafter, to be carefully recounted. I am so convinced, however, that the best chance for the reader to remember any of the entangled history of the discovery and settlement of Spanish America is to have it told to him according to place, and not to date, that I entirely postpone all further allusion to Columbus, until that part of the coast which he discovered becomes important in the general narrative.

<sup>2</sup> [From May 1499 to June 1500.]

<sup>3</sup> [Or north coast of Brazil according to some inquirers.]

<sup>4</sup> Venezuela is sometimes placed, but wrongly, to the S.W. of the Lake of Maracaibo. Its position in this map has been determined with great care. (See folding plate of maps.)

<sup>5</sup> "Thickly populated, the houses supported artificially in the water on stakes thrust into the ground under water, communication being carried on by canoes."—NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, iii, p. 8.

His account of their medical proceedings deserves to be recorded. "We observed frequently that when any one had a fever, at the time when the fever was at its worst they put him into a bath of very cold water, and then obliged him to run round a great fire for two hours until he was extraordinarily hot, carrying him then to bed to sleep; this way we saw many cured. Also they often diet themselves very rigorously, going without eating or drinking for three or four days."—NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, iii, p. 215.

<sup>6</sup> [Controversy rages about many subjects connected with the gradual exploration of America, but over none more stormily than the voyages, character, and personality of Amerigo Vespucci. One school of writers concedes his claim to have made a voyage between May 1497 and October 1498, in which case the foregoing note refers to that voyage and to natives of some part of the coast of the Gulf of Mexico; the other school will only admit his voyage in the text, with Ojeda, to have been his first. As this is not a history of the discovery of America, it is sufficient to notice it as a question which has been bitterly debated since Sir Arthur Helps wrote.]

over Europe was the cause of his name being given to the third part of the habitable globe. It would be a curious question to investigate whether lies and false rumours have had more practical effect in the affairs of the world than absolute facts.

There was also a voyage made to these parts by Rodrigo de Bastidas, with Juan de la Cosa for pilot, which was successful;<sup>1</sup> and we have Las Casas's authority for saying that Bastidas was a humane man towards the Indians. Indeed, he afterwards lost his life by this humanity; for, when Governor of Santa Martha, not consenting to harass the Indians, he so alienated his men, that a conspiracy was formed against him, and he was murdered in his bed. The renowned Vasco Núñez was in this expedition; and the knowledge he gained there had the greatest influence on the fortunes of his varied and eventful life.

Passing over the other voyages which were made to the Tierra-firme, as not immediately relevant to our purpose we come now to the complicated but important events which belong to the contemporaneous expeditions of Ojeda and Nicuesa, from which there ensued a consistent course of discovery and colonization, leading to the greatest results.<sup>2</sup>

The expeditions of Nicuesa and Ojeda were interwoven together in a curious manner. It is probable that during the short regency of the Archduke Philip,<sup>3</sup> and while

<sup>1</sup> [Rodrigo de Bastidas sailed from Cadiz in October 1500. He explored the coast from Cape de la Vela to Nombre de Dios, and, after obtaining a quantity of gold and pearls, was wrecked on the coast of Española when returning.]

<sup>2</sup> [Ojeda made a second voyage, which ended in lawsuits, to the Gulf of Paria in 1502, and a third in the same direction in 1505. In 1499-1500, Pedro Alonso Niño and Christobal Guerra made a voyage, mainly for trade, towards Tierra-firme. About January 1500, Vicente Yañez Pinzon, who had commanded the *Niña* in the first voyage of Columbus, sailed with four vessels, and, making the coast of South America at Cape St. Augustine, explored the delta of the Amazon; he returned to Spain in September 1500. Almost coincident with the voyage of Pinzon was one by Diego de Lepe, who struck the coast of South America to the south of Cape St. Augustine, but soon returned to Spain. NAVARRETE, *Col. de los Viajes*, iii; WINSOR, *Narr. and Crit. Hist. of America*, ii; *Col. de Doc. Inéditos*, xxx, xxxi, xxxii.]

<sup>3</sup> The son of the Emperor Maximilian, and the father of Charles the



Ferdinand was at Naples, the course of enterprize towards the New World languished; and thus, on the death of Philip and the return of the old King to the government of Castille, those undertakings, which had their origin at the court of Spain, were naturally brought forward at the same time.

The characters of the two Commanders were entirely dissimilar. Ojeda was a strong, daring, devout, common soldier, of great personal endurance and resolution, but with no power of managing other men. A remarkable feat of his in early life, performed in the presence of Queen Isabella—walking swiftly out upon a plank from the top of the Giralda at Seville, and back again—was typical of what he could do.<sup>1</sup> His personal strength was immense. Placing himself at the bottom of the Giralda, he could throw an orange to the top, a height of two hundred and fifty feet.<sup>2</sup> His connexions in Spain were powerful: he had a first cousin of the same name, one of the inquisitors, and a favourite of Ferdinand and Isabella; and he himself had been brought up in the family of the Duke of Medina Celi, where it is probable Columbus first met with him, and induced him to accompany him in his second voyage. Under such a commander as Columbus, Ojeda was most serviceable, as may be inferred, for instance, from the romantic capture of Caonabó, whether that story be true or mythical; but when in command himself, Ojeda seems to have been but a poor creature, for thews and sinews are not the things by which men are long governed, even the rudest.

Nicuesa, on the other hand, was a courtly person of good birth,<sup>3</sup> a good speaker, a good musician. He came to Hispaniola with Ovando, acquired wealth there, and was

Fifth. He had married Juana, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. See p. 132, where the state of the Spanish Royal Family is discussed.

<sup>1</sup> "He went on a piece of timber that ran out 20 ft. from the tower, and walked along it as fast as if it had been a brick floor, and at the end of the plank lifted one foot in the air, turned, and walked back as quickly."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxii, p. 499.

<sup>2</sup> He had been bred up in the family of the King's uncle.—"A man of pure blood and noble descent, brought up in the household of the very illustrious Don Enrique Enriquez, uncle of, and Grand Master of the palace to, the Catholic King."—OVEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 28, cap. 1.

deputed by the colonists to go to the court of Spain to solicit that their Indians should be given to them for one life, and that thus they might be so far independent of the caprices of the Governor for the time being. This important concession he obtained for them, and it is a step in the history of *encomiendas*. At the same time, he procured for himself the government of Veragua. As this province had been discovered by Columbus,<sup>1</sup> such a grant of its government must have been very offensive to his son, the present Governor of the Indies.

Ojeda, who was favoured by Bishop Fonseca, obtained at the same time the appointment to the government of the province of Urabá, adjacent to Veragua. Ojeda was poor, his previous voyages having been of little or no profit to him; but he was aided in furnishing his present expedition by the celebrated pilot, Juan de la Cosa, and by a lawyer named Martin Fernandez d'Enciso,<sup>2</sup> whom Ojeda at once appointed alcalde in his province, which received the name of Nueva Andalucia.

Nicuesa, as the richer personage, had the larger fleet and more men; but he, too, went far beyond his means in fitting out his fleet, and came thereby into great embarrassments.<sup>3</sup>

Both these Commanders arrived at St. Domingo, which was to be their starting-point, at the same time; and, as was natural, began to quarrel about the limits of their respective governments. Finally, however, Juan de la Cosa persuaded the two Governors to accept the river Darien as the boundary line between their two provinces. The province of Urabá was to extend from the river Darien eastward to Cape de la Vela; the province of Veragua from the river Darien<sup>4</sup> westward to Cape Gracias

<sup>1</sup> In his fourth and last voyage.

<sup>2</sup> Enciso was the author of the valuable work *Suma de Geographia*, which is now very rare. There is a copy in the British Museum.

[The *Suma de Geografia*, printed in 1519, was the first work on navigation published in Spain.]

<sup>3</sup> [The permission to Nicuesa and Ojeda, with the conditions under which it was granted, is dated 9th June 1508, and is printed in the *Col. de Doc. . . de Indias*, xxii.]

<sup>4</sup> [The River Darien, otherwise the San Juan, is now known as the Atrato.]

4 Dios. The ~~former~~ province was called Castilla del Oro, which name it gained from the flattering accounts that Columbus had given of it.

Rodrigo de Colmenares, a soldier who acted as Nicuesa's lieutenant, says that the agreement made with both these Governors by the authorities in Spain, was not fulfilled in St. Domingo by the Admiral and his officers. Nicuesa and Ojeda were to have been allowed to be accompanied by four hundred of the inhabitants of Hispaniola, with Indians assigned to them, of whom they were not to be deprived for four years. These would have been the rich men of the colony, and would have brought provisions; but, this privilege being denied to Ojeda and Nicuesa by the Admiral, they were obliged to take poor people. Also they were to have had the government of Jamaica ceded to them, as in that island there was an abundance of the provisions that would be needful for them; but this also was denied by the Admiral.<sup>1</sup> How these slight drawbacks, often the proximate causes of failure in great adventures, show the evil of divided and conflicting authority! The Governor of the Indies ought to have been the chief, if not the sole, responsible agent for further discovery. How strange it is, too, to see an island, like Jamaica, from which so much wealth has since been extracted, treated as a mere adjunct to greater gifts, and as a sort of storehouse for provisions. Either of these Governors would have done well to have taken this storehouse in lieu of his province, if he could have been contented to cultivate it. But such small and practicable forms of ambition were not congenial to the men, nor to the age in which they lived.

Ojeda was the first to sail for his province. He left the port of St. Domingo on the 10th or 12th of November

<sup>1</sup> "Also it had been arranged and agreed with the King that they were to be given the control of an island called Jamaica, in which was a plentiful supply of the provisions they required; this, likewise, was refused to them."—*Memorial de Colmenares*; NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, iii, p. 387.

[Mr Fiske (*Discovery of America*, ii, p. 367) remarks, "Everything had been arranged as ingeniously as possible to hinder cordial co-operation: to the rivalry between the two governors was added the dislike felt for both by Diego Columbus."]

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1509, with two ships, two brigantines, three hundred men, and twelve mares. As horses and dogs played such an important part in the wars of the Spaniards against the Indians, these animals well deserve to be named in the enumeration of any forces.

Nicuesa's departure was delayed by the difficulty he had in providing for his debts. It is probable that the Admiral's well-known enmity towards him, as to one who was unjustly about to reap the fruits of his father's discovery, increased the difficulty. Even when Nicuesa's vessels had started, and he himself was just going to embark, or indeed had embarked (for, to the best of Las Casas's recollection, who was an eye-witness, Nicuesa was taken out of his boat), he was arrested for five hundred castellanos.<sup>1</sup> If Nicuesa could but have known from what evils this hard creditor was, unconsciously, endeavouring to save him, he would have gone to prison with a merry heart. But, indeed, even a very little of the knowledge possessed by the seer, would often make us resign ourselves to misfortunes without much struggling, accounting them as blessings in disguise, or as, at least, the smallest evils in a long series. Some friendly notary came forward, and paid this debt for Nicuesa, who was thus enabled to start at last, about ten days after Ojeda. Nicuesa's fleet consisted of two good ships, a caravel, and two brigantines; and he was accompanied by six hundred and fifty men.

Meanwhile Ojeda, who no doubt was delighted at having got the start of Nicuesa, had not profited much by this precedence. In four or five days he reached the port of Carthagena.<sup>2</sup> Having received permission from those who had the management of Indian affairs in Spain, to make war upon the Indians, he began at once to avail himself of it. The grounds of this permission were very slight and questionable. The Indians had, on some occasions, resisted the violence of the Spaniards, or shown an unwillingness to let them land, and therefore

<sup>1</sup> [Perhaps about £2000 present value.]

<sup>2</sup> [He landed at Calamar, near the present city of Carthagena, which was not founded until 1531 (*Cartas de Indias*, p. 672).]





they were to be accounted enemies. Ojeda, it is said, disregarded the advice of Juan de la Cosa, the second in command, who wished him not to enter the country at Carthagena, where the Indians were not friendly, and where they used poisoned arrows, but to pass on at once to the Gulf of Urabá, and found his settlement there. But to this Ojeda would not listen, and taking Juan de la Cosa with him, he made an attack upon a town called Calamar, where he captured seventy Indians, and sent them to his ships. He then marched upon a large Indian town called Turbaco, which he found deserted. He pursued the fugitive Indians, and, while doing so, his men spread themselves over the country in a disorderly manner. The Indians, seeing this disorder, collected together, and came down suddenly upon the Spaniards, who in their turn had to become the fugitives, and to take refuge in a fort constructed hastily of palisades. The Indians gave the Spaniards no rest, and pressed the advantage they had gained with so much vigour, that they succeeded in putting all the Spaniards to death, with the exception of Ojeda and one other. It was by an impetuous sally that Ojeda saved himself; and his smallness of stature was of good service to him on this day, for he was thus enabled to shelter himself well behind his shield. All the rest of the Spaniards, to the number of seventy or a hundred, perished.

The luckless commander fled to the woods: meanwhile, the fleet, ignorant of what had befallen their chief, was quietly coasting along. At last, however, gaining intelligence of what had happened, his men went to seek him, and they found him almost speechless with hunger, his sword in his hand, and the marks, it is said, of three hundred arrows in his shield. They made a fire, warmed and fed him. As he recovered, and while he was narrating his adventures to the men, Nicuesa's fleet hove in sight. The contest between these two Governors, while they were at St. Domingo, having been carried on in the most offensive and personal manner, Ojeda might well expect ill-treatment from Nicuesa, or at least contempt: and so Ojeda begged his men to return to the ships, to leave him where he was, alone, and to say nothing about him while Nicuesa was on that coast.

Ojeda's men did not act exactly in accordance with their instructions. They told Nicuesa how Ojeda and his party, having destroyed Calamar, had then entered the country, but had not been heard of since; that they, however,—the remainder of the force,—were determined to do their duty by their commander; that they would go and seek for him, and would bring him, if Nicuesa would assure them that he would overlook what had occurred between Ojeda and himself in times past.

Nicuesa was angry at their even imagining that he could take advantage of his present superiority to punish former affronts, and he assured them that he would be a brother to Ojeda; on which assurance they produced their commander, whom Nicuesa received most kindly.

The friendship of the Spaniards boded no good to the Indians. The two Governors joined company, and went with four hundred men to seek for Juan de la Cosa, and to chastise the Indians. By public proclamation the Spanish Commanders forbade that any quarter should be given to the Indians; and, falling upon Turbaco, they committed incredible slaughter, burning the Indians in their cottages, and slaying men, women, and children. To show the terror the horses inspired, it is mentioned that the Indian women, when about to fly from the burning huts, rushed back into the flames at the sight of those terrible quadrupeds.

The Spaniards succeeded in finding the body of Juan de la Cosa, but it was in a horrible condition, on account of the poison in the arrows which had been the cause of his death. This sight appears to have daunted his countrymen, who lost no time in returning to their ships.

Ojeda now took leave of Nicuesa, and made his way to the Gulf of Urabá, capturing Indians in the course of his voyage. Entering the gulf, he endeavoured to find the river Darien, which the two Governors had agreed to accept as the boundary of their respective territories. This river he could not discover, but he disembarked on the eastern side of the gulf, and founded a town on a height there, calling it San Sebastian. This was the third town founded upon the Tierra-firme, the first having been the one which the old Admiral, Columbus,



began to found in Veragua, and the second that of Vera Cruz, which Ojeda himself had founded, during a former voyage, in Bahiahonda. Neither of these towns was now in existence.

Ojeda sent his stolen gold and Indians home to Saint Domingo, in order that more men and supplies might in return be despatched to him; and he inaugurated the building of his new town by a foray into the territories of a neighbouring Indian chief, who was reported to possess much gold. This foray, however, produced nothing for Ojeda, and his men were soon driven back by clouds of poisonous arrows.

How their people should be fed, seems always to have been a secondary consideration with these marauding governors; and, indeed, on like occasions, in all periods of the world, it appears as if gold were supposed to be meat, drink, and clothing, the knowledge of what it is in civilized and settled communities creating a fixed idea of its universal power, of which people are not able to divest themselves. Famine now began to make itself felt at San Sebastian. Just at this point of time, however, a supply from a most appropriate quarter came suddenly to the aid of the hungry inhabitants of the new town. There came in sight a vessel, which had been stolen from some Genoese by its commander Bernardino de Talavera, who was bringing it to the new settlement, as being a place where the title to any possessions would not be too curiously looked into. The supplies which this vessel brought were purchased by Ojeda, and served to relieve for the moment his famishing colony. But their necessities soon recommenced; and, with their necessities, their murmurings. The Indians, also, harassed them by perpetual attacks, for the fame of Ojeda's deeds was rife in the land, and the natives were naturally very unwilling to have such a neighbour near them. The Spanish commander did what he could to soothe his people, by telling them that Enciso, the partner in his expedition and his alcalde, was coming; and, as for the Indians, Ojeda repelled their attacks with his usual intrepidity. His Indian enemies, however, began to understand the

character of the man they had to deal with, and, resolving to play upon his personal bravery, which amounted to foolhardiness, they laid an ambushade for him. The Indians then feigning an attack, Ojeda rushed out with his wonted impetuosity until he came within reach of their ambushade, which concealed four bowmen. These discharging their poisoned arrows, one of them passed through his thigh; and this was the first time, strange to say, in his adventurous and riskful life, that he had been wounded. No veteran, however, could have shown more indifference to pain in the remedy which he insisted upon adopting. He ordered two plates of iron brought to a white heat to be tied on to the thigh, threatening the reluctant surgeon to hang him if he did not apply this remedy. It was so severe that it not only burnt up the leg and the thigh, but the heat penetrated his whole body, so that it became necessary to expend a pipe of vinegar in moistening the bandages which were afterwards applied. All this torture Ojeda endured without being bound. Would that this terrible energy and power of endurance had been given to a career more worthy of them!

The supplies brought by Talavera being now entirely consumed, Ojeda's company began to feel again the pressure of famine, and to murmur accordingly. They also took counsel amongst themselves about seizing furtively the brigantines and returning to Hispaniola, for they disbelieved, or affected to disbelieve, that Enciso was coming at all. Ojeda resolved to anticipate their designs, and, in these straits, to return himself to Hispaniola, leaving Francisco Pizarro, a name now first appearing in history, in command as his Lieutenant.

Before parting from his people, Ojeda made this agreement with them,—that if within fifty days he did not return, they might then dispeople the settlement, and go wherever they pleased in the two brigantines. This being agreed upon, the wounded commander, with a few attendants, embarked in Talavera's vessel.

Whether Bernardino de Talavera and his crew were not able to manage their stolen craft, or that they met with very bad weather, the result was, that they could not

make the island of Hispaniola, but were shipwrecked on the coast of Cuba, near the port of Xagua. During the voyage the most violent feud had broken out between Ojeda and his fellow-passengers. Their interests were not likely to have coincided; for these marauders, who had stolen their vessel from some port in Hispaniola, would hardly be anxious to come within sight of that island to which Ojeda's course was anxiously bent. Whatever may have been the cause of the quarrel, it went to such lengths that Talavera and his ruffians, who were much the stronger party, put Ojeda in chains. In this way they travelled together, after they were wrecked, towards the eastern part of Cuba, the brave Ojeda being freed from his chains whenever his companions feared an attack from the Indians. He, though outnumbered, did not lose his accustomed daring, heaping reproaches upon his companions, and saying he would try and kill them all, if he only had them to fight with, two by two. The greatest danger, however, which these Spaniards had to encounter, as they made their way along the coast, was not from the Indians, but from a horrible swamp in which they floundered on day after day; the swamp extending as they marched along, and they, poor shipwrecked men, with wet clothes and damaged provisions, now sinking up to the armpits, now disappearing altogether in the mud.

Ojeda's courage had never failed him: his devotion was now to be made manifest. In his wallet he always carried an image of the Virgin Mary, a present from his patron, Bishop Fonseca, which he revered much, "for he was always a very devout servant of the Mother of God" (*porque siempre fué muy devoto servidor de la Madre de Dios*). When they rested on any spot where the mangrove trees, which love such swamps, were above the waters, Ojeda was wont to hang up his image on a bough, paying adoration to it himself, and exhorting the rest to do the like. So they journeyed through this dreadful swamp for a whole month; and not till they had left half their company buried in it, did they arrive at an Indian town on the firm ground, called Cueyba. They were a wretched band, almost dead with fatigue; but the good Indians of Cueyba fed the Spaniards, washed them, and succoured

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them in every way. There Ojeda left his image, having vowed to do so at the first Indian town he should arrive at. He also persuaded the Cacique to build an oratory for the image, and endeavoured to explain to him what it meant.

The friendly Indians furnished the Spaniards with guides into the province of Macaca: from thence, the shipwrecked men remembering that there were Spaniards in Jamaica, sent one of their company, Diego Ordaz, in a canoe, to inform their fellow-countrymen of their fate. Ordaz reached Jamaica safely; and, upon hearing his story, Juan de Esquivel, the Governor of Jamaica, sent a vessel for Ojeda and his companions. The captain deputed to receive Ojeda was Pamphilo de Narvaez, who, when Ojeda's canoe reached the vessel, thus courteously addressed him, "Senor Ojeda, will your worship please to come hither; we have to take you on board"; but the shipwrecked Governor of Urabá, as if conscious that honours scarcely belong to the unfortunate, replied with a proverb expressive of his ill-fortune, "*Mi remo no rema*,"—my oar rows not. Narvaez, however received the unfortunate man with all honour, and conducted him to Juan de Esquivel at Jamaica. This was the governor upon whose appointment Ojeda, much enraged that Jamaica had not been assigned to Nicuesa and himself for their provision grounds, had said that, if he went to Jamaica, he would cut off the Governor's head: but Juan de Esquivel, putting aside all remembrance of these threats, received Ojeda very kindly, and furnished him with the means of transport to St. Domingo. As for Bernardino de Talavera and his confederates, they fell into the clutches of the law on account of their act of piracy;<sup>1</sup> but no notice was taken of anything that they did to Ojeda; and he made no stir about it himself, for, as Las Casas says, Ojeda was not the man to accuse them (*no era hombre Ojeda que los acusaria*).

The fifty days agreed upon by Ojeda and his men as the term of their stay at San Sebastian, had doubtless passed before he reached Hispaniola; and, even if the time had not expired, the penniless Ojeda would not the less have

<sup>1</sup> [They were hanged in 1511.]

been unable to fulfil his part of the contract. It appears that he lived for some time afterwards at St. Domingo, and the only thing we hear of him is the characteristic one, of his narrowly escaping assassination by his activity. He never regained power or influence; and this man, who had been engaged from the first discovery of the New World in so many great enterprizes, and who was Governor of Urabá, died in the extreme of poverty. It appears that he became a Franciscan monk for a few hours before his death, and was clad in the habit of that Order when he died, "making," as Oviedo assures us, "a more laudable end than other captains in these parts have done."<sup>1</sup> He was buried just beyond the threshold of the church in the monastery of St. Francisco, perhaps from a wish of his own that the multitude of passers-by might walk upon his tomb. He was a type of many men of that time, who, like himself, were reckless, valiant, devout, adventurous. So much does one love bravery, even of the coarsest kind, that many will echo the pious wish of Las Casas, that it may have pleased God to bless Ojeda before his death with a knowledge of his sins, and with repentance for his dealings with the Indians.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "And when he felt that he was dying, he begged to be dressed in the habit of the Order . . . and so Ojeda, captain and fighter, became a devout Observant brother . . . for a few hours and was buried in the monastery of St. Francis in that city, making a more praiseworthy end than other captains in these parts have done."—OVEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 27, cap. 4. [He died in 1515.]

<sup>2</sup> "May it have pleased God to have given him before his death a consciousness of the sinfulness of his deeds towards the Indians."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 311.

## CHAPTER II

### ENCISO'S REINFORCEMENTS — ESTABLISHMENT AT DARIEN — NICUESA'S MISFORTUNES WITH HIS OWN COLONY—NICUESA REJECTED BY THE MEN OF DARIEN

THE narrative now returns to Ojeda's men, who had been left at San Sebastian, in the Gulf of Urabá. When the fifty days had expired, and there were no signs of their Commander, who, indeed, at that moment was plunging through the dismal swamp upon the coast of Cuba, they resolved to dispeople the settlement and to sail away. But, as the two brigantines would not hold them all, they were obliged to wait until hunger and the assaults of the Indians had reduced them to the proper number. Then they killed and salted the horses that were left, and, having thus provided themselves with some food for the voyage, they embarked, Pizarro commanding one of the brigantines, and a man named Valenzuela the other. Their sojourn at San Sebastian had lasted six months.

When they were twenty leagues from the shore, Valenzuela's brigantine, struck, as it was imagined, by some large fish, went down suddenly. Pizarro made for the port of Carthagena, and, as he entered, saw a ship and a brigantine coming in at the same time. These proved to contain the men and the supplies brought at last by the Bachiller Enciso, Ojeda's *alcalde mayor*. He had with him one hundred and fifty men, several horses, arms, powder, and provisions. A curious incident, fraught with great results, had occurred early in Enciso's voyage. In the midst of his cargo, unknown to its owner, was a barrel<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> OVIEDO says that Vasco Núñez was concealed in the folds of a sail.—*Hist.*, lib. 29. Prohemio. [He had been farming—if such men really did more than make agriculture a cloak for gold-seeking—at Salvatierra in Española, having previously sailed from Spain with Rodrigo de Bastidas in 1500.]

containing no provisions, but a living man, of whom much will hereafter have to be said. His name was Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, a native of Xerez de Badajoz, an adventurer, a skilful master of the art of fencing,<sup>1</sup> who, as he was in debt, and as indebted people might not leave the island of Hispaniola without the permission of the authorities, had secretly, by the aid of a friend named Bartolomé Hurtado, contrived to get into this barrel, and to form part of Enciso's stores. When the vessel had got out to sea, Vasco Nuñez made his appearance, much to the dissatisfaction of Enciso, a precise lawyer, who must thoroughly have objected to aid in any breach of the law. He threatened to put Vasco Nuñez on a desert island, but suffered himself to be pacified at last. To those who know the part that Vasco Nuñez was about to play, it almost seems as if the Arabian story of the unfortunate man who freed a malignant spirit from durance, and found that it had sworn to destroy the person who should deliver it, was so far about to be acted over again.

On the meeting of the remnant of Ojeda's company, under Pizarro's command, with the reinforcements brought by the Bachiller Enciso, the latter commander at once concluded that these people had fled away from their duty and had deserted Ojeda. Indeed, Enciso was so convinced of this, that he was inclined to put them into confinement, and at first would give no credit to the story they told him. Their famished appearance, however, was an undeniable witness in their favour, and at last they succeeded in convincing the Bachiller of the truth of what they were saying; and then, naturally enough, they did all they could to dissuade him from proceeding to San Sebastian: but he, full of his lawyer-like notions that he must do what he had contracted to do (and he is to be honoured for this), resolved to go on to Urabá; and, partly persuading them with a hope of plunder, partly insisting upon their obedience, he contrived to carry them along with him.

Enciso, with his vessels in good trim, sailed out from

<sup>1</sup> This, at least, is the meaning that has been given to Peter Martyr's word, "digladiator."

Carthagena to pursue his way to Urabá; but, unfortunately, just as he was making for land near San Sebastian, from some oversight on the part of the man at the helm, his vessel was thrown upon a rock, and in a very short time beaten to pieces. The men with difficulty saved themselves in the boat and the brigantine, but all the cattle and almost all the provisions were lost; and when Enciso and his men made their way to San Sebastian, they found the fortress entirely destroyed. Their situation was manifestly most perilous. For some time they managed to subsist upon wild animals caught in the mountains, and upon the buds of the palm-tree; but this precarious supply soon came to an end, and then it was necessary to obtain food by force.

The Indians here, however, as Ojeda had found before, were most formidable opponents. It is mentioned that three naked Indians with poisoned arrows pierced as many Spaniards as they had arrows for, and then fled like the wind.

We may easily imagine how the desire to return now grew upon the men, and how Pizarro and the remnant of Ojeda's people clamoured at their advice and entreaties not having been listened to. While the hearts of all men in this little colony were thus down-stricken, and their purposes confused, each man giving or listening to advice (*oyendo cada uno á cada cual su sentencia*), Vasco Núñez spoke out. He said that he recollected, when he was with Rodrigo de Bastidas, entering this Gulf of Urabá, and that they disembarked in the western part of it, where they found an Indian town near a great river in the midst of a fertile country. He also said, which was most to the present purpose, that the Indians in those parts did not use poisoned arrows. How deeply it is to be regretted that this knowledge of poisoned arrows did not overspread the continent, for, as every reader of the Iliad is always on the Trojan side, so it is impossible in reading this conquest of the New World, not to wish for the success of the weaker party, or at least not to regret that their weapons were for the most part so lamentably unequal to those of their invaders.

This river, that Vasco Núñez spoke of, proved to be the



river Darien. His advice was instantly listened to; and the Bachiller Enciso, taking with him Vasco Nuñez and a hundred men, set out to find the Indian town. They succeeded in finding it; but the Indians, who had heard of their doings in other parts, were not inclined to receive them amicably. Five hundred men (the women and children having been sent away) had taken up a position on a hill, awaiting the orders of Cemaco, their Cacique, for battle.

This being a critical period in the fortunes of the new colony, the Spaniards then present knelt down devoutly, and made a vow, that if victorious, they would dedicate their first church and settlement to Santa Maria de la Antigua, alluding to an image so called in Seville, which was much revered by all the citizens there; and they also vowed, that they would send a company of pilgrims with jewels to her shrine at Seville. The Bachiller, moreover, in a pedantic way, as it seems to me, made all his men take an oath, that they would not turn their backs on the enemy. When the fight commenced, Vasco Nuñez proved to be right in his report of there being no poison in the arrows of these Indians, who accordingly, with their puny weapons, made no resistance worthy of the name to the blows with sword and lance dealt by the Spaniards. Those Indians, who were not killed, fled at once, leaving an easy victory to the Spaniards, who might, I imagine, have saved themselves the jewels which they had promised to send to the shrine of Santa Maria de la Antigua.

There is a different version of this story, mentioned by Las Casas. It is said that the Indians received Enciso and his party well, and gave them gold; but that upon a demand being made to be informed where this gold came from, the Cacique, counselled by his elders, would not tell the Spaniards, for fear they should settle in those parts; that they then applied the torture to him, when he confessed where the gold was to be found, but afterwards, collecting his forces, resolved to attack them.

Whichever story is right, it is certain that Enciso had this skirmish with the natives of Darien, in which his forces were victorious. He afterwards entered the Indian

town, where he found a store of provisions; and, pursuing his researches, he discovered in a cane-brake the household gods of the Indians, among which were also found golden breastplates and golden chains. Sending for the rest of his people from San Sebastian, Enciso founded the town of Santa Maria de la Antigua del Darien.<sup>1</sup>

But a far more difficult task than building a town had to be attempted by the Bachiller Enciso: he had to rule a number of discontented, disappointed men; and it does not seem that he possessed any peculiar talents for that difficult undertaking. They had now, too, a good pretext for refusing obedience to his authority; they said that he had no power over them, as they were not in Ojeda's territory, but in that of Nicuesa, which was true. Such a pretext would never have distressed a real commander, but it was of sufficient force against the Bachiller Enciso. It appears he had given great offence by issuing a peremptory mandate that no one, on pain of death, should traffic with the Indians for gold. Vasco Nuñez was, no doubt, at the head of the malcontents, and he is said to have complained bitterly of the injustice of the Bachiller, declaring that he had nothing but the name of an educated man, but was in reality a most cunning fox.<sup>2</sup> The men, resolving to depose Enciso, proceeded to an election of their officers; and, in straits like these, a good choice is nearly sure to be made. They chose Vasco Nuñez and a man named Zamudio for their alcaldes, and a person of the name of Valdivia for regidor: but even this election was not decisive in the minds of these unfortunate colonists. There still remained three factions; one in favour of Vasco Nuñez, another devoted to Enciso, and a third to Nicuesa.

An accident determined the matter in favour of Nicuesa. He had left behind him in Hispaniola his lieutenant, Rodrigo de Colmenares, who was to follow with stores and

<sup>1</sup> [There are no remains of the town, and the exact site is uncertain.]

<sup>2</sup> "That the jurisdiction of Ojeda did not reach beyond Basso, that each man might be a captain, and that they would not obey a lawyer who governed not according to justice and the general good but for his own advantage; that he had nothing but the name of learning for that he was really only a cunning fox."—BENZONI, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 20.

provisions. Colmenares met with great hindrance from the authorities in Hispaniola; and it was not until ten months after his chief had sailed, that he was able to follow him. The first point he had touched upon in the Tierra-firme was near the Sierra Nevada, in the province of Santa Martha. From thence he had proceeded westward along the coast, in search of Nicuesa, making smoke-signals on the shore and firing off guns, which were at last heard by Enciso's men, who, returning the signals, brought Colmenares to them. He arrived at Darien in November 1510.

The provisions which Colmenares brought in his ships were powerful arguments in favour of Nicuesa; the recollection of his pleasant manners and of his kindness to their late commander Ojeda, must have told in his favour; and, in fine, the greater part of Enciso's company joined in sending Colmenares to Nicuesa to ask him to come and take the command of them.

It is necessary now to turn back to Nicuesa, and to ascertain what had become of him, while Enciso was being deposed. This narrative is exceedingly tangled, but unavoidably so. The events, however, if not important in themselves, were so important in their consequences, and are such needful links in the great chain of the New World's history, that they must be patiently recounted.

Nicuesa left the port of Carthagena soon after Ojeda had quitted it, and bent his course at once to his province of Veragua. Lope de Olano, of whose previous life we only know that he was concerned in the revolt of Roldan against Columbus, was Nicuesa's captain-general. The mode of sailing was this: Nicuesa went in a caravel attended by the two brigantines, in one of which was Lope de Olano. Nicuesa's caravel and the brigantines kept close to the shore; the two large ships stood out more to sea, as was requisite. They were all to sail westward, making their way to Veragua; but soon after quitting Carthagena, the weather became very contrary, and one stormy night, Nicuesa, to avoid danger near the coast, put out to sea, and in the course of that night parted company with all the other vessels.

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On the morning neither the brigantines nor the other two vessels were to be seen. Nicuesa was in great tribulation, thinking that his fleet had been lost. He returned towards the coast, and went up a river, of which the name is not given. There the tide, flowing out with a great rapidity unperceived by the ship's crew, left him on a sand-bank. The caravel instantly fell on its side, and began to go to pieces. Nicuesa and his ship's company were only saved by the boldness of one of them, who contrived to fasten a rope to a tree, by which, as on a bridge, the men made their way to land; but all the stores, provisions, and clothes were lost.

One thing, however, of value remained to them,—the boat. In that Nicuesa put four seamen, and ordered them to coast along to the west, keeping near him, while he and the rest pursued their course by land. The journey was a terrible one; half naked and without shoes they had to make their way across swamps, and amidst an unknown and untraversed country. Neither were they free from fear of hostile Indians, for one morning a page of Nicuesa's, who was conspicuous from wearing a white *sombrero*, and whom probably the Indians took for the chieftain of the Spaniards, was shot dead by an arrow, to the great sorrow of his master. Thus they proceeded for some days, when, on one occasion, imagining that they could save much distance by going all of them in the boat from one promontory to another, where the land made a great curve inwards,<sup>1</sup> they did so, using the boat by turns, and all of them got safely to this headland, which proved, however, not to be part of the coast, but a desert island, where there was not even fresh water. The only thing like it was a pool here and there of muddy swamp. The four seamen who managed the boat went off with it one night, very likely the night after they had made the discovery that this was an island; and Nicuesa and his men were left to endure the extreme of suffering. Some of the men went mad with misery. Like the beasts of the field, they went on all fours and fed on whatever herbage they could find, but were ignorant, as the

<sup>1</sup> I conjecture this to have been the Boca de Chiriqui, beyond the island Escudo de Veragua.

beasts are not, of what herbage was good and what was noxious.

Leaving Nicuesa and his men in this deplorable state we have to return to his second in command, Lope de Olano, and to his proceedings on the morning after the storm in which Nicuesa parted company from his fleet. I cannot perceive that Lope de Olano was much to blame in what he did on his occasion, though, perhaps, a very zealous officer in his master's behalf might have done more. Meeting with the other brigantine, which a certain Pedro de Umbria commanded, the two captains took counsel together, and, concluding that Nicuesa would be sure to make his way to Veragua, they resolved to hold on their course in that direction. They found the other vessels in the river Chagre, which was then called the River of Lizards, a name it had received from Columbus. It was then, I imagine, that Lope de Olano, finding that the great vessels had no tidings of the caravel, said that their commander was lost (which, perhaps, Olano really thought); and by general consent he took the command of the expedition.<sup>1</sup> But it was no longer in a hopeful state.

<sup>1</sup> An account, varying from the above in several important particulars, is given by OVIEDO in the 28th book of his history recently published (1852) from MS. by the Royal Academy at Madrid. According to that, it would appear that Nicuesa and his fleet anchored safely at a port in the province of Cueva, which he called Puerto de Misas (probably on account of mass being said there): that he left his two large vessels and one brigantine in that port: that he went on in the caravel to find Veragua, being accompanied by Lope de Olano in the other brigantine; and that he had a quarrel with the pilot of Olano's vessel, which was the cause of his being deserted. The pilot maintained, and rightly, that they had arrived at Veragua, and thus expressed himself:—"This is Veragua, and I came here with the Admiral Don Christoval Colon, when he discovered this land." But Nicuesa, relying upon some papers which the Adelantado Bartolomé Colon had given him, persisted in saying that they had not come to Veragua, and spoke abusively to the pilot from on board the caravel. The pilot said to Olano, that they might cut off his head if they did not find that he was right.

Then, according to Oviedo's account, on the following night, "it appearing to this bad captain that the Governor was a lost man" (*pareciéndole á este mal capitán quel gobernador yba perdido*), he commanded the pilot and the mariners to turn back, and not to follow the lantern of the caravel.

The remaining part of the story is not essentially different, except

The ships had suffered greatly from a worm which was very destructive to ship timber on that coast, and all the provisions had been spoiled or lost.<sup>1</sup> After several unimportant movements from the river Chagre to the river Belem, and then to the river Veragua, where it appears that Olano endeavoured to found a colony, which endeavour failed, we find him on the shore near the river Belem, with the great ships knocked to pieces, and a caravel formed out of them, with his two brigantines, with no stores, no provisions, and many of his men dead.<sup>2</sup>

The treachery of the four mariners who left Nicuesa on the desert island, proved eventually a fortunate treachery for him. Coasting along to the eastward, they came to the spot where Lope de Olano was, and told him of the ill-fortune of Nicuesa, saying that they had left without telling their commander, in order to save the whole party. The news of the existence of Nicuesa was probably very unwelcome to Olano; but he sent a brigantine to fetch off Nicuesa, and in it what provisions he could spare, being palm-tree buds and such like wretched stuff, which was all that they had to eat there.

The brigantine succeeded in reaching the desert island where Nicuesa was, and in bringing him off to rejoin his company at the river Belem. The first thing he did, on meeting his people, was to command the arrest of Lope de Olano,<sup>3</sup> and bitterly to reproach his other principal

that it makes Lope de Olano, who was a Biscayan, secure his power by means of the other Biscayans, who were in some numbers in the fleet.

The writing of history, like all other human affairs, is, for the most part, but a choice amongst difficulties. In this case, however, it is not important to make a choice, and I shall, therefore, merely leave the two accounts to stand side by side. It must be noticed, in justice to Nicuesa, that Oviedo's account throws much more blame on the Lieutenant, Lope de Olano.

<sup>1</sup> [The *Teredo Navalis*.]

<sup>2</sup> It was noticed that the men always died when the tide was ebbing: "It was noticed in these calamities that no one died but when the tide was ebbing."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxiv, p. 331.

<sup>3</sup> According to Oviedo, the punishment which Nicuesa inflicted upon Lope de Olano was condemning him to grind maize in the public street, with two stones, as the Indian women grind it, his feet being chained together as the Moorish slaves are chained, who, at the gate

officers for not having made efforts to discover him. They humbly implored forgiveness. Had they not suffered enough, they said; four hundred were already lost, and they, the rest, were in a fair way to perish? But Nicuesa, whose good qualities were such as flourish only in sunny seasons, was no longer gracious, but, on the contrary, very ill-conditioned (*mal condicionado*). Here we may see the difference between a commander by nature and an accidental one. In all the chief enterprizes which distinguish the early colonization of the New World, the most striking thing to notice is the way in which the great commanders endure, not merely hunger and want, but revilings and upbraidings. Columbus, Cortes, Pizarro, Vasco Nuñez, shine out in adversity, and in those times when the ordinary bonds of discipline are loosed. And no one, who has not shared adversity with a number of his fellows, can estimate the meanness of mankind in such cases. It is only the great souls who are great throughout. Certainly, Nicuesa did not possess one of these souls: and even what he did rightly bore the air of caprice and petulance.

Meanwhile the state of things around him grew worse and worse, but the severity of his temper did not abate, and his men believed that he absolutely took delight in imposing upon them dreadful burdens, when he sent them into the country to see what they could get by force from the Indian villages. To such an extremity were the Spaniards reduced, that, on one occasion, they are said to have been driven by hunger to cannibalism.

Nicuesa resolved to leave a spot which had been so fatal to him; but, even in doing this, he contrived to show his newly-born harshness. Each of his men, made wise by adversity, had sown a little bit of maize; and as, in that glowing country, harvests ripen soon, they were ex-

of Triana, in Seville, pound sedge.—“In payment of his treason to grind maize publicly in the street every day with his own hands, by means of two stones, one somewhat concave, the other long and rounded, such as the Indians use; and giving him a certain proportion of what he ground for his support, he being chained by the feet as are the Moorish slaves who pound esparto (net and mat grass) at the gate of Triana in Seville.”—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 28, cap. 3. [He was released by Vasco Nuñez.]

pecting in a few days to reap the benefit of their sowing. They implored him, therefore, to stop for these few days; but he would not listen to their entreaties.

Taking with him in the caravel and the two brigantines their complement of men, he left the others behind, and set sail, directing his course towards the east. When they had gone four leagues, one of the seamen happened to recollect that a port was thereabouts. He had been with the "Old Admiral," for so Columbus was called, when he discovered the province of Veragua; and this mariner said, that, if he were not mistaken, there would be found half-buried in the sand an anchor, and near it a tree under which there would be a spring of fresh water. They went, and found the mariner to be right; and the harbour proved to be Portobello, so named by Columbus. Here they endeavoured to make an entrance into the country, in order to get some supplies of any kind; but they were so weak that they could hardly hold their weapons in their hands. The Indians succeeded in resisting them, and in killing twenty. From Portobello they went sailing towards the east, until they came to another harbour. "In the name of God (*en nombre de Dios*) let us stay here," they exclaimed; and "*Nombre de Dios*" is the name the port has ever since retained.<sup>1</sup> What poetry and history there are in names! Here they contrived to build a little wooden fort, and Nicuesa sent for the rest of the men from the river Belem. Since his departure from Belem he had lost two hundred more men; and now, of the seven hundred and eighty-five men who came out with him from Hispaniola, there remained, when he had built this fort in December 1510, only about a hundred.

<sup>1</sup> It afterwards became the great port for the reception and transmission to Spain of the riches of Peru.—"*Nombre de Dios*, from which has been brought from these parts in our times so many millions of pesos of gold and innumerable hundredweights of silver to be carried to Spain, and much has been brought from it to our islands, to such an extent that it is impossible to know exactly the quantity and value."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 28, cap. 3.

[*Nombre de Dios* remained the treasure port until 1584. As it was an open roadstead, with the heavy ocean swell always rolling in, and was also very unhealthy, the settlement was then removed to Puerto Bello, a few miles to the westward, which became the port for treasure shipment.]



Having finished the fort, he commenced his attacks upon the Indians; but the provisions gained by these attacks seldom lasted long. Hunger, which had dogged the steps of this expedition from the night of that fatal tempest and dispersion, still relentlessly pursued it. At last, all the ordinary rules of discipline were at an end; and there could not even be found one man in the company strong enough to do the duty of a sentinel.

It cannot be said, however, that these men were utterly neglected by Fortune. They were just at this moment in a state of extreme and apparently hopeless peril, when Colmenares, pursuing steadily his course eastward, came upon their track, and found them. Great was the delight of the seventy<sup>1</sup> men who remained,—for their number had now dwindled to seventy: and Nicuesa's delight was not the least, when, shedding tears, he threw himself at the feet of one who brought him present safety and such good hopes for the future. Indeed, it was a change of fortune such as seldom occurs except in fiction. According to Peter Martyr's account, Colmenares found Nicuesa "of all living men the most unfortunate, in a manner dried up with extreme hunger, filthy and horrible to behold"; and now he was summoned to become governor to those who remained of his rival Ojeda's force, and who, unfortunate as they had been, had at any rate made a less wretched settlement than Nicuesa and his men could boast of having done.

But Nicuesa's good temper and good sense were not now to be recovered by any gleam of good fortune. Indeed, he seems to have acted on this occasion, or rather to have talked, which is often more dangerous, like a man bereft of common-sense. Hearing that Ojeda's company had collected gold, upon which, as, strictly speaking, they were settled in the country assigned to him, he had some claim, he gave out that he should take it away. The disgust which the deputies from Darien began at once to conceive for him, may be easily imagined; nor was this

<sup>1</sup> It may show the difficulty of making anything like a clear account of these events, to find that Colmenares, the man of all others who should have known, makes the numbers left two hundred; all the best historical authorities say seventy or thereabouts.

disgust likely to be diminished by any good words that would be said of him by his own men at Nombre de Dios. Lope de Olano, though in chains, contrived to put in his word, privately telling the new-comers that Nicuesa would do with them as he had done with his own people, when they sent for him from the desert island. Lope de Olano's words had the more effect, as he was able to communicate with some relations and men from his own province, Biscayans, who were at Darien. The bond of community which existed between men belonging to the same province, is one of the most remarkable things in this history, and forms an under-current which influences the narrative in very unexpected ways. It is a circumstance which shows how badly welded together were the various provinces of Spain, and what different interests arose from this diversity of race, habits, and language. Still, had Nicuesa been swift in acting upon his good news, he might have anticipated the consequences of his foolish and tyrannical sayings, and have defeated his Biscayan enemies; but, while he sent on to Darien a caravel in which there were many of the people who murmured against him, he himself in the brigantine stopped on the way for about a week, to reconnoitre some little islands, and to capture Indians—for which iniquity there came a terrible retribution. No sooner had the people in the caravel reached Darien, than they began to influence the colonists against him, and with such success, that the Darienites became quite mad with themselves at their folly in having invited Nicuesa.<sup>1</sup> It was as if the frogs in the fable had already foreseen the conduct of King Stork before he came amongst them. It may easily be imagined, and was generally reported, that Vasco Nuñez did what he could to incite the people against the coming Governor; and, it is said that he canvassed with great secrecy the principal persons, man by man, convincing them of their error in having chosen Nicuesa, and showing them the remedy for it.

When Nicuesa neared the place of disembarkation,

<sup>1</sup> [Nicuesa, delaying at the islands, sent on a messenger, Juan de Caicedo, who bore him no goodwill, and who, seeing how things were going, frankly called the Darien settlers fools for calling in "a cormorant to swallow your substance and yourselves."]

expecting, no doubt, to be received with whatever pomp and honour men so tattered and buffeted would still endeavour to show their new chief, he found an array of armed men drawn up on the shore, looking as if they meant to repel an invasion, rather than to receive a governor. Amongst them were Vasco Nuñez and the procurador of the settlement; and this latter officer, in a formal manner, proclaimed aloud that Nicuesa should not be permitted to land, but should return to his own settlement at Nombre de Dios. At this astounding reception, Nicuesa for a short time could hardly speak: then he said, "Gentlemen, you yourselves sent for me. Let me land, and we will talk the matter over: you have to hear me, and I have to hear you; and we have to understand one another. Afterwards do with me what you will." This speech seems to contain some of his former graciousness of manner; but the men of Darien knew him too well now, and sternly refused to have anything to do with him.

It was evening, and he drew off for that night, intending to return the next day, and to see whether they would change their minds.

The next day, when he appeared, they called him to come to them, meaning to take him prisoner, for when he landed, they rushed upon him, but as he was remarkably swift of foot, he escaped from them. Vasco Nuñez, who had some grandeur of soul, felt ashamed of this sorry scene, rebuking his company for their ill manners; and Nicuesa, now much fallen, asked them to take him for a companion if not for a governor, and, if not as a companion, as a prisoner, saying that they might put him in chains. But they only mocked him. Vasco Nuñez did his best to make them change their behaviour, and he even inflicted the punishment of a hundred stripes on one of those who took most part against Nicuesa;<sup>1</sup> but, seeing that he could not resist the whole settlement, he sent privately to Nicuesa, telling him not to trust himself amongst them unless he should see him, Vasco Nuñez, with them.

<sup>1</sup> [According to one account Nicuesa came to a working arrangement with Vasco Nuñez, but the latter found that he had not sufficient influence to carry it into execution.]

Nicuesa, however, gave no heed to this; for afterwards, when there came a deputation to him, saying that they would give him welcome, but that he must pardon the rudeness of their former reception, he listened to them, and placed himself in their hands. But no sooner had they got him into their power than, it is said, they made him swear that he would go away, and not stop until he should appear before the King of Spain and his Council. This, I imagine, was meant for mockery. In vain the wretched Nicuesa reminded them that they were in his territory, and protested before God, as he could not before the King, against their cruelty in sending him away so ill-provisioned as he was for any voyage. They paid no attention to his entreaties, but turned him adrift in the most wretched brigantine that was there.<sup>1</sup> Hopeless of moving his enemies, or indignant at their mockery, Nicuesa set sail from Darien, and was never heard of more. The last words that he was heard to utter as he left the shore were, "Show thy face, O Lord, and we shall be saved."<sup>2</sup> Some suppose that he perished at sea, other that he either went to, or was driven upon, some island on the coast of Veragua, and was destroyed by hunger or by the natives, as it was reported that these words were found cut out in the bark of a tree, "*Aquí anduvó perdido el desdichado Diego de Nicuesa*"—(Here went lost the unfortunate Diego de Nicuesa). But, even if such an inscription were ever found, it might have been made at the time of his former calamity, when he was left on a desert island. It was on the 1st of March 1511, that he set sail in his crazy vessel; and he was accompanied by seventeen companions who still remained faithful to him.

It is sad, notwithstanding their lamentable errors, to see how these adventurous commanders one after another

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Pascual de Andagoya says that the brigantine was caulked with iron, as the wretch who did it, told him:—"And it is even said that the boat was caulked with a blunt tool only. This I heard from the caulker who did the work."—PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA, *Relacion*; NAVARRETE, *Col.* iii, p. 395.

[This means that the oakum had been driven in with a blunt tool only, instead of first with a sharp and then with a blunt caulking iron. The seams would quickly open.]

<sup>2</sup> OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29. Prohemio.

drop from the scene. I say their lamentable errors, because, with our modern notions at least, it is impossible to regard their conduct towards the Indians as otherwise than infamous; but we must not let this blind us to any merits they might have had. And certainly their sad fate, and the fate of those under them, seems to afford some retribution for their sins towards the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Ojeda, as we have already seen, died in the utmost poverty; Nicuesa perished either from hunger or shipwreck: of the companions whom they brought out with them, full of hope and proud designs, only forty-three remained of Nicuesa's men, and thirty or forty of Ojeda's. The men who were now at Darien, were those who had come in the reinforcements brought by Enciso to Ojeda, and by Colmenares to Nicuesa.

<sup>1</sup> Vasco Nuñez, in one of his letters to Charles the Fifth, discusses the fate of Nicuesa, and attributes it to his tyranny towards his own men, which was, evidently, the proximate cause of his destruction.—NAV., *Col.*, iii, p. 360.

# BOOK VI

## VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA

### CHAPTER I

VASCO NUÑEZ'S DEALINGS WITH THE NEIGHBOURING CACIQUES  
—FIRST NOTICE OF THE PACIFIC—FACTIONS AT DARIEN  
—VASCO NUÑEZ RESOLVES TO DISCOVER THE SOUTH SEA—  
SUCCEEDS IN HIS ENTERPRIZE, AND TAKES POSSESSION OF  
THE PACIFIC FOR THE KINGS OF CASTILLE—HIS RETURN  
TO DARIEN

THE facts in history often form themselves into groups so much resembling one another as to give the impression of the same play being acted over and over again, only with a change of names and with new scenery. This is especially the case in the events I am recounting; and, knowing beforehand the fate that generally awaits the principal actors, it appears to me as if I were but presenting new versions of the same story.

The principal interest of the narrative is now centered in Vasco Nuñez. The valorous Ojeda, the polished Nicuesa, and the flourishing lawyer, Enciso, little dreamed that the conduct of their enterprize was to devolve upon a man who should furtively come out in a cask to evade his creditors. He had, however, most of the qualities necessary for a great commander in those times. He was clever, crafty, courageous, forward in enterprize, good-humoured and handsome. I think, too, he had considerable nobility of nature; and I am not disposed to lay the whole blame of the rejection of Nicuesa upon Vasco Nuñez. His conduct to Enciso is far more questionable, and justly laid him open to the accusation

of having kept in mind the threats and reproaches which Enciso addressed to him when he made his unwelcome and undignified appearance from amidst the cargo of Enciso's vessel.

After Nicuesa's departure, Vasco Nuñez instituted a process against the Bachiller, saying that he had usurped a jurisdiction to which he had no claim, as he had not received any authority from the King, but only from Ojeda, who was already dead. Upon this poor pretext, Vasco Nuñez sequestered Enciso's goods and put him in prison, but afterwards freed him, upon the understanding that he should sail for Castille, or for Hispaniola. It seems a very weak proceeding of Vasco Nuñez to have sent home a man, who, he must have known, would be a powerful enemy; but he took care to send in the same ship with Enciso his own comrades in office, Zamudio and Valdivia: Valdivia to make the proper representations to Don Diego Columbus and the Treasurer Pasamonte at St. Domingo; Zamudio, to go on to Spain, and there to represent to the King the services which the colonists at Darien had rendered to His Highness. Valdivia did not go empty-handed.

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After the departure of the deputies, some Indians came to Darien as spies, under the pretext of bringing provisions; and they told the Spaniards, probably with a view to getting rid of them as neighbours, that there was much gold in Cueva, a province at thirty leagues distance. Vasco Nuñez sent Pizarro with six companions to discover this province. The Indians under their Cacique Cemaco, who had been dispossessed by the Spaniards, set upon these seven men; but, as the Indians of Darien did not use poisoned arrows, they were not able to overpower this small detachment, though they wounded them severely; while, on the contrary, even this handful of Spaniards contrived to kill a great many of the natives, before returning to Vasco Nuñez. He then, accompanied by a hundred men, made an incursion into these regions; but in the mean time, the Indians had sought refuge in flight: a measure, which, had there been a Fabius to advise them, would always have been adopted as their

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surest mode of warfare. Vasco Nuñez, finding none to subdue or to treat with, returned to his town of Darien. This, therefore, proved a thoroughly fruitless enterprize; there are signs of Vasco Nuñez having been discouraged at this time; and his career might have ended as deplorably as that of Nicuesa or Ojeda. He might have been contented with making petty incursions, have thus deprived himself of the neighbourhood of the Indians, and eventually have perished from starvation, had it not been for the curious and lamentable circumstance about to be related.

Nicuesa not returning to Darien, of which event it appears Vasco Nuñez had for some little time an expectation, he sent for the remnant of Nicuesa's men who were left at Nombre de Dios. As these people were on their way to Darien, and were in a port of the province of Cueva, there came to meet them two Spaniards, without clothes, and with painted bodies, like the Indians.

These were men who, on some occasion about a year and a half before, had fled from Nicuesa's ships to escape punishment, probably well deserved, and who, entering the country, had been received kindly by Careta, the Cacique of Cueva. Indeed he had made one of them, named Juan Alonso, his principal captain. This wretch bade the Spaniards tell Vasco Nuñez, that if he would come to Careta's town, he, Juan Alonso, would deliver his master, the Cacique, bound, into the hands of Vasco Nuñez; and he also gave the alluring intelligence that there were great riches in that province.

Vasco Nuñez was delighted at this news, and he prepared at once to act upon it, entering Careta's territory at the head of one hundred and thirty men. Having arrived with his "apostles," as Las Casas calls them, at the Indian town where Careta dwelt, he found the Cacique awaiting his coming. Vasco Nuñez, conscious of the treachery he was about to commit, and perhaps not liking to gild it over with fair words, rudely demanded provisions from the Cacique. The Indian Chief replied, that, whenever Christians had passed by his home, he had ordered provisions to be given them liberally, and he would do so now; at the same time he remarked that he



was straitened himself, as he was at war with a neighbouring chief, Poncha, and his own people had not been able to sow as usual.

Juan Alonso, probably speaking in Spanish in presence of the Cacique, then suggested to Vasco Nuñez to pretend to take leave of the Chief, and afterwards to come back at night in order to make an attack on the town: he, for his part, would do his best to secure the person of the Cacique. Vasco Nuñez adopted the suggestion. He went away, but, returning at night, made his attack in three divisions, awakening the sleeping Indians with the war-cry of "Santiago."

Juan Alonso, true to his promises of treachery, secured the person of the Cacique; and Vasco Nuñez thus succeeded in carrying him and his family to Darien, and in devastating his town.

The good Bishop of Chiapa,<sup>1</sup> who is the principal authority for these transactions, does not fail to introduce a few words of moral discourse, in which he naturally likens Juan Alonso to Judas Iscariot; but such proceedings need little comment. Careta, however, was not upon this occasion ill-treated by the Spaniards, but, on the contrary, was conciliated and converted into a most useful ally. He gave his daughter to Vasco Nuñez, who loved her much; and the Cacique entered into an agreement (here we may trace the wisdom of the Spanish Commander) to aid in growing supplies for the Spaniards, if they would assist him in carrying on war against his enemy Poncha.

This is the way in which an invading force generally makes its footing good in a country, by converting the foolish enmities of the natives into stepping-stones of conquest. The above conditions were agreed upon, and were fulfilled. Careta's Indians prepared their maize crops; and the Spaniards, on their part, united with Careta's men in making an incursion into Poncha's territory. That Cacique, however, being well-informed of what was going on, fled, and left his territory to be devastated by the united forces of Nuñez and Careta.

Forty leagues from Darien, and adjoining to Careta's

<sup>1</sup> Las Casas.

territory, was a country called Comogra, situated on the sea-coast, the Cacique of which country was named Comogre. This Chief being brought into friendship with the Spaniards by one of Careta's relations, who had taken refuge from his own lord at Comogre's court, Vasco Núñez went with his men to visit his new ally. The Spaniards were much surprised by the signs of comfort and civilization which they found in this Indian Chief's dwelling. Indeed, it was the most like a palace of any thing that had been seen since the discovery of the Indies.<sup>1</sup> Its dimensions were a hundred and fifty feet in length, eighty in breadth, and eighty in height; the floors and ceiling were exquisitely wrought;<sup>2</sup> and it contained many apartments, a granary, cellars, and, what perhaps was most curious, a room where the bodies of the King's ancestors were preserved as mummies.

Comogre gave his Spanish visitors a splendid welcome, and presented them with four thousand pesos of gold and seventy slaves. A fifth part of whatever gold was discovered, belonged by right to the King of Spain; and it was to watch over his rights, that a *veedor* was appointed to attend each expedition. While the Spaniards were weighing out this fifth part of the gold which Comogre had given them, or dividing the residue amongst themselves, there arose, to use the expressive words of an old translation of Peter Martyr, a "brabbling among the Spaniards about the dividing of the gold."

Now Comogre had seven sons, of noble appearance and large stature; and the eldest was a young man of great spirit and ability. It would have been well, perhaps, for the whole of South America, if he had not been a man of this kind.

The youth, seeing this miserable contention amongst the Spaniards, which must have appeared singularly contemptible in the eyes of an Indian who would value little the substance these strangers were quarrelling about, and

<sup>1</sup> "Built on very heavy posts, surrounded by a stone wall, and the ceilings so beautifully worked in wood that the Spaniards wondered at the sight, and could not express their admiration of the cleverness and beauty of the work."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> PETER MARTYR, dec. 2, cap. 3.

who, even for a great thing, would have thought such contention unseemly and undignified (for a noble indifference about most earthly things is to be seen at the bottom of the Indian character throughout both continents), was disgusted at this clamour. So, after the fashion of Brennus, dashing with his hand the scales in which the gold was, and scattering it about, he made the following speech. "What is this, Christians; is it for such a little thing that you quarrel?<sup>1</sup> If you have such a love of gold that, to obtain it you disquiet and harass the peaceful nations of these lands, and, suffering such labours, banish yourselves from your own lands, I will show you a country where you may fulfil your desires. But it is necessary for this, that you should be more in number than you are now, for you would have to fight your way with great kings, and amongst them, in the first place, with King Tubanamá, who abounds with this gold, and whose country is distant from our country six suns."

Then he signified to them, that this rich territory lay towards a sea, and southwards; at which sea they would arrive, he said, after passing over certain sierras. It was navigated, he added, by ships with sails and oars, a little less in size than those of the Spaniards. Traversing that sea, they would find a land of great riches, where the people had large vessels of gold out of which they ate and drank; where indeed there was more gold than there was iron in Biscay—(it appears that the shrewd Indian had been making inquiry with respect to the manufacture of the Spanish swords). The above is not to be taken as a speech set down in a classical history, but it appears that the substance of it really was uttered by the young Indian Prince. Juan Alonso and the other Spaniard, who had lived with King Careta, served as interpreters; and these men seem to have been fated to be the conduits, as it were, of great evil, and their intelligence the cause of great adventures.

It appears, moreover, that the young Prince informed

<sup>1</sup> PETER MARTYR adds, "— and that you make so much turmoil about a little gold which nevertheless you melt down from beautifully wrought work into rude bars (for they carried their melting instruments with them)."—Dec. 2, cap. 3.

his attentive audience, that a thousand men would be requisite for this undertaking; and that, when asked for the grounds of his information and for his advice, he made another speech, in which he told the Spaniards that his countrymen, too, had wars, and that he had learned these facts from one of his own men ("Behold him," he exclaimed,) who had been a captive in those countries he spoke of. He also offered to accompany the Spaniards; and he said they might hang him on the next tree if his words should not prove true. The substance of his speeches, and, probably, some of the exact words, were conveyed to the Spanish Court. This was the first notice of the Pacific, and also of Peru. It is likely that Pizarro was a bystander. "Our captains," says Peter Martyr, "marvelling at the oration of the naked young man, pondered in their minds and earnestly considered his sayings."

It seems that, for injuries done in former times to his nation, this youth wished to stir up the Spaniards against his neighbours; and that he suggested a joint invasion, whenever the Christians should be reinforced, offering to join them with his father's forces. "A prudent youth," this Prince is called by both historians, Peter Martyr and Las Casas; but it is not the description, I think, that would now be given of him: and one would say, that it needed not the lights of history or the thoughtfulness of refined civilization, to make all prudent people well aware of the latent danger of an over-powerful ally.

The Spaniards, having baptized Comogre and his family, giving him the name of Don Carlos, took their leave and returned to Darien, joyful and thoughtful, in the feverish state of mind of persons seeing before them great enterprises for which they are not quite prepared. When they arrived, they found that Valdivia had come with a ship and some provisions, also with a gracious message from the authorities of Hispaniola; but, as Las Casas well says, "In the house of a gambler joy lasts but a short time." Their provisions were consumed in a few days; and Famine, always dogging their steps, soon began to attack them again. It was not altogether their own fault on this occasion, for a great storm had destroyed what they had sown.

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They lived now, as some of the feudal barons in the middle ages, by predatory forays, robbing and devastating wherever they could.

It was about this time that Vasco Nuñez sent Valdivia to Hispaniola with the King's fifth of the gold. It amounted to fifteen thousand *pesos*; but neither he, nor his gold, ever reached their destination, for his vessel was wrecked in a perilous part of the sea near Jamaica, called the Vívoras, or Pedro shoals, and he himself perished by the hands of the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Vasco Nuñez has been held to be a man who dealt very wisely, and, upon the whole, very mercifully with the Indians; but we are told that he was accustomed to put them to the torture,<sup>2</sup> in order to make them discover those towns which had most gold and provisions, and then to attack these towns by night. He wrote to the Admiral saying that he had hanged thirty caciques, and must hang as many as he should take, for the Spaniards, being few, had no other way until he should be supplied with more men.<sup>3</sup> He meant that terror was his only means of supplying the defect of force.

<sup>1</sup> [Twenty men escaped in an open boat, and six or seven died of thirst before she drifted ashore. Valdivia and four others were eaten; eventually, two men, a sailor and a friar, escaped. The sailor became an Indian prince, and, when the chance offered, refused to resume the advantages of Spanish civilisation; the friar was rescued by Cortés in 1519. See also *post*, Bk. x, cap. 2.]

<sup>2</sup> This is confirmed incidentally by Vasco Nuñez himself, in his letter of the 20th of January 1513: "I have ascertained this from many Caciques and Indians, and from the neighbours of this Cacique Dabaybe, as well as from others. I find it to be all true, because I have obtained the information in many ways, from some by torture, from others by kindness and the gifts of things from Spain."—NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, iii, p. 365.

<sup>3</sup> "Vasco Nuñez wrote to the Admiral (Diego Columbus) that he had hanged thirty Caciques, and would hang as many as he took, alleging that as the Spaniards were few in number there was no other way open to them until reinforcements came."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 83.

[Sir Clements Markham (*Narrative of Pascual de Andagoya*, Hakluyt Society) describes Vasco Nuñez as "a born ruler of men . . . there is more of diplomacy and negotiation than of massacre and oppression in the history of this great discoverer's career . . . he is among the few Conquistadores who showed any sign of such qualities as humanity and generosity when the unfortunate natives were concerned."

Hearing of a temple full of gold in the country of a Cacique called Dabaybe, towards the south of the gulf of Urabá, the Spaniards made an incursion into his caciquedom, and, the Indians offering little or no resistance, Vasco Nuñez's men devastated the country. Meanwhile Colmenares had been sent to the east of the gulf, whither Vasco Nuñez, after his return from Dabaybe, went to join him, and, uniting their companies, they entered the territory of a Cacique called Abenamache. This Chief and his men made as stout a resistance as they could with their two-handed wooden swords called *macanas*, rushing fiercely on the Spaniards, but to little purpose. After the battle, a common soldier, whom Abenamache had wounded, came up to him, and, with one blow of his sword, struck the Cacique's arm off. From thence Vasco Nuñez, leaving Colmenares behind him, went up a river, and entered the territory of a Cacique named Abibeyba, where the houses were in trees (as the ground was marshy) of such bigness that seven or eight men hand in hand, were scarcely able to surround one of them : but these Indians, though living in this strange manner, do not seem to have been particularly barbarous or neglectful of the comforts of life, for it is mentioned that they had their cellars underground for fear of the wine being spoiled by the motion of the trees when shaken by the wind. Abibeyba was summoned to descend from his tree fortress, and, when he refused, the Spaniards began to cut the tree, upon which he was obliged to come down.

They asked him for gold, in reply to which he said he had none of it himself, and did not care for it any more than for stones, but he promised to endeavour to get some, and was allowed to depart for that purpose. As he did not return, however, at the stated time, the Spaniards destroyed his settlement. This Abibeyba, in his wanderings among the mountains, came upon Abenamache, the Cacique who had lost his arm : bewailing their hard fate they betook themselves to Abraibe, a neighbouring Chief, into whose country a foraging expedition

Accepting Sir C. Markham's estimate as accurate, the reader may reflect that most of the Spaniards possessed fewer of these noble qualities described above, and illustrated in the text.]

headed by a Spaniard named Raya, of the force left with Colmenares, had lately penetrated.

The Caciques compared their fears and their griefs. "How long," they said, "shall we bear with the cruelty of these strangers; is it not better to die than to endure what they inflict upon us?" Encouraging each other in this way, they resolved to make an attack with five or six hundred men upon the station of Colmenares; but, unfortunately, on the very evening preceding their attack, Colmenares had received a reinforcement, and the Spaniards were able not only to repel their assailants, but to capture many of them. These were sent to Darien, to labour there.

Colmenares and Vasco Nuñez now returned to Darien, leaving in Abenamache's country a man named Hurtado in command of thirty Spaniards. These Spaniards making a foray and capturing some of the neighbouring Indians, Hurtado sent a boat with the prisoners and with many of his men, who were ill, down the Rio Negro to Darien. On their way the boat was attacked by four large canoes, and all the Spaniards but two were drowned. These two, clinging to logs and concealing themselves in the bundles of drift wood that were floating down the river, made their way to the shore, and thence back to Hurtado. He and the few who were with him abandoning their post in terror, set out for Darien; and, being greatly alarmed by this attack on their boats, they made inquiry of their prisoners, and found that five Caciques,—Cemaco, the dispossessed of Darien, Abenamache, Abibeyba, Dabaybe, and Abraibe,—had formed a conspiracy, if by such a name it can be called, and had sworn to collect their forces and make a joint attack on Darien, in order to destroy the Spaniards utterly. This plan might have been successful, had not a foolish Indian betrayed it to his sister, a favourite of Vasco Nuñez, named Fulvia. Addressing his sister tenderly,<sup>1</sup> the Indian told her that their chiefs could no longer bear the insolence of these new-comers, that they had prepared a hundred canoes, that their army would

<sup>1</sup> "Dearest sister, give ear to my words and keep most secretly that which I say to you if you care for your own welfare and mine and that of our country and people."—PETER MARTYR, dec. 2, cap. 5.

amount to five thousand men, that provisions were being stored up at Tirichi, that their design had gone so far that the Caciques had agreed upon the division of the goods of the Spaniards, and he warned her to look after her own safety when the day for the attack should come. She, more mindful of her lover than of her country, betrayed the secret to him.

To be forewarned, in the case of men fighting with iron swords and lances against others with wooden ones, was not merely to be forearmed, but to be victorious. Indeed, Vasco Nuñez turned this conspiracy to great advantage. He caused Fulvia to induce her brother to come to him, and the foolish, confiding Indian, when put to the torture, confessed that this conspiracy was the work of the indefatigable Cemaco, that he planned the attack in the canoes, and that certain men, whom he had sent as a pledge of friendship to Vasco Nuñez, and who tilled his grounds at Darien, had instructions to kill him, which they had never been able to do, as he always overlooked his labourers on horseback with a lance in his hand.

Vasco Nuñez compelled the young Indian to conduct Colmenares at the head of seventy men to Tirichi, the spot where the forces of the Caciques were assembling for their enterprize. He himself went with another seventy to hunt for Cemaco, but was unsuccessful. Colmenares, however, falling suddenly on Tirichi, captured the confederates, seized their provisions, put the Chiefs to death, and terrified the whole country into submission.

Vasco Nuñez and the colonists at Darien now resolved that a messenger should be sent to the King in Spain, to inform His Highness of what had happened, to tell him of the speech of Comogre's son, and to seek for countenance and succour. Vasco Nuñez wished to go himself, thinking probably that he should plead his own cause best at court; but his companions would not hear of this. They chose Quicedo<sup>1</sup> and Colmenares as their deputies, who were well furnished with funds for their important mission; but their means of transport were of the most miserable description. One of the old brigantines, which

<sup>1</sup> [Or Juan de Calcedo, who had been sent by Nicuesa to announce his arrival, *ante*, p. 232.]



had been set aside for six months as unfit for use, was now repaired, and all the tackle for it manufactured out of the bark of trees. With a very scanty stock of provisions, and with not a soul on board who knew anything of navigation, in this crazy vessel, the deputies from Darien left that colony in October 1512. As was to be expected, they made a very bad passage, and, being driven to Cuba, and afterwards going to Hispaniola, which was in accordance with their instructions, they did not arrive in Spain until May 1513. Peter Martyr, who says he frequently entertained these deputies from Darien, gives an account of their appearance, in which he mentions that "they are as yellow as people in the jaundice, and are swollen." This he attributed to the bad air of Darien, which was situated in a most unhealthy spot; but they accounted for their appearance by the starvation they had undergone.

One part of their intelligence seems particularly to have caught the fancy of their countrymen at home. An Indian had mentioned that there was a river where the natives fished for gold with nets; the deputies repeated this story; and, as all persons, from the weakest to the strongest, thought that this was a kind of fishing at which they would be singularly expert and fortunate, all Spain became anxious to fish in those waters.

Unfortunately for Vasco Nuñez, the deputies from Darien were not the only persons of that colony at this time present at the court of Spain. The Bachiller Enciso was there too, and no doubt loud and bitter in making his complaints of Vasco Nuñez. Besides, there was the intelligence of what had happened to Nicuesa; and, as it appeared that Vasco Nuñez had been the greatest gainer from Nicuesa's repulse, he had also to bear the greatest part of the blame for that transaction. The King ordered him to be proceeded against criminally; and in the civil courts he was cast in all the expenses which Enciso had by his means been put to.

Meanwhile Vasco Nuñez had no easy time at Darien, where factiousness reigned supreme. It seems as if this spirit of faction exists in a new colony in amount almost

equal to that in which it is found in a village, or a small town, at home; and that this spirit is still further developed by the general activity which is necessary, and the sharper way in which men come against each other, in such a colony. It appears that there was a man named Bartholomew Hurtado, whom Vasco Nuñez favoured much, and to whom, as we have seen, he entrusted authority. This man, for some reason or other, became particularly obnoxious to several of his comrades. Their faction, uniting under a person of the name of Alonso Perez and another called the Bachiller Corral, sought to take prisoners both Hurtado and his Chief; but Vasco Nuñez, who was always alert, made the first move, seizing Alonso Perez and putting him in prison. The Bachiller's party at once drew out in battle array in the centre square of the town; Vasco Nuñez and his faction did the same; and the contending parties would have come to blows but for the prudence of some of them, who saw that, whichever gained the day, the Indians would probably destroy the victors. The dispute, therefore, was suppressed for the moment, on Vasco Nuñez agreeing to release Alonso Perez, the ringleader on the other side. The ill-feeling, however, was not in the least subdued; and a second time the opposite party resolved to seize upon Vasco Nuñez. The cause of this outbreak was as follows. The division of gold naturally formed a pregnant source of dispute amongst those rude men who composed the remnant of the forces of Ojeda and Nicuesa, and who were now under unauthorized command of Vasco Nuñez. They accused their commander of unfairness in this division, and, as there was a sum of ten thousand *castellanos* just about to be divided, this was the cause, or they made it the pretext, of their intention to seize upon him. The way in which he surmounted this difficulty may serve to show the abilities of the man for command. Far from seeking to be the great personage in this important business, on the very evening of the day of partition, or the day before, the politic Vasco Nuñez went out to hunt, and left his enemies to seize upon the gold and divide it. They, as was to be expected, made enemies in doing so, and loosened the bands of their own faction, while those

who were injured, or who thought they were, made a great tumult, recalled Vasco Nuñez to full power, and put his enemies, Alonso Perez and the Bachiller Corral,<sup>1</sup> in prison. There they probably consoled themselves by drawing up papers of accusation against their enemies.

About this time there arrived at Darien two vessels, with a hundred and fifty men in them, laden with provisions which had been sent from Hispaniola by the Spanish authorities in that island. These ships also brought something which was very welcome to Vasco Nuñez, namely, his appointment as Captain-general. This was done by Pasamonte the Treasurer, whose power, it was said, stretched to this extent; and certain it is, that he was always in favour with King Ferdinand, and was regarded as one of the King's especial servants, in contradistinction to those of the Admiral. Any show of authority must have been very welcome to Vasco Nuñez; and in his joy, as if it had been a birthday, he willingly consented to let loose all the prisoners, as an act of grace upon the receipt of good news.

However, amidst all these flowers of rejoicing, there came (it is conjectured in the same ships, certainly soon afterwards), some adder-like news, which must have filled the heart of Vasco Nuñez with apprehension; and that was, the report of his own disfavour at court, caused by

<sup>1</sup> Bachelors of law were always odious to Vasco Nuñez. In a letter to the King, in which he is very sparing indeed in making any claim for himself, he says,—“One thing I supplicate your Highness, for it is much to your service, and that is, that you would give orders under a great penalty, that no bachelor of law, or of anything else, except medicine, should be allowed to come to these parts of the Tierra-firme, for no bachelor comes here who is not a devil, and who does not lead the life of a devil; and not only are they bad themselves, but they also make and contrive a thousand law-suits and iniquities. This regulation would be greatly for your Highness's service, for the land is new.”—*Carta al REY*, Jan. 20, 1513. NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, iii, p. 374.

[See also *post*, vol. iii (Book xii, cap. 1). The inhabitants of the Isle of Wight seem to have had the same prejudice: “In Sir George Carey's time (*temp.* Elizabeth) an attorney coming to settle in the island, was by his command with a pound of candles lighted hanging at his breech, with bells without his legs, hunted out of the island.”—*Oglander Memoirs*, Lond. 1888, p. 21.]

the complaints of the Bachiller Enciso,<sup>1</sup> and by the intelligence of Nicuesa's fate. I should think that the rumour of the King's intention to appoint a governor of Darien was very likely to have accompanied this news, which came in a letter from Zamudio, a former colleague of Vasco Nuñez.

His position was now most perilous. The maxim, *confugiendum est ad imperium*, must have occurred to him, not exactly in the words of the original, for Vasco Nuñez had little learning, but only by that intuitive knowledge which great peril, coming upon great resources of mind, easily strikes out. In truth, it is melancholy to observe, as wise men have done, how much of private misery is at the bottom of great actions, and what sleepless furies have driven many an Orestes to enterprizes that were transcendently difficult, but not so difficult as staying still, or so painful as looking backwards.

Vasco Nuñez resolved, therefore, to be the discoverer of that sea, and of those rich lands, to which Comogre's son had pointed, when, after rebuking the Spaniards for their "brabbling" about the division of the gold, he turned his face towards the South. In the peril which so closely impended over Vasco Nuñez, there was no use in waiting for reinforcements from Spain: when those reinforcements should come, his dismissal would come too. Accordingly, early in September 1518,<sup>2</sup> he set out on his renowned expedition for finding "the other sea," accompanied by a hundred and ninety men well armed, and by dogs, which were of more avail than men, and by Indian slaves to carry the burthens. He went by sea to the territory of his father-in-law, King Careta, by whom he was well received, and, accompanied by whose Indians, he moved on into Poncha's territory.<sup>3</sup> This Cacique took

<sup>1</sup> The error of Vasco Nuñez in his treatment of Enciso followed him throughout his career. But, indeed, this is a common case in ordinary life; as a large part of the best time in many men's lives is spent in extricating themselves from the consequences (or in enduring them) of one or two thoughtless blunders.

<sup>2</sup> [On 6th September.]

<sup>3</sup> [Mr Hubert H. Bancroft (*WORKS; History of Central America*, i, p. 359) points out that the Spaniards must have had accurate information from the natives about the trend of the southern coast, or Vasco

flight, as he had done before, seeking refuge amongst his mountains; but Vasco Nuñez, whose first thought in his present undertaking was discovery, not conquest, sent messengers to Poncha, promising not to injure him. The Indian Chief listened to these overtures, and came to Vasco Nuñez with gold in his hands. It was the policy of the Spanish Commander on this occasion to keep his word. We have seen how treacherous he could be, when it was not his policy to be true; but now he did no harm to Poncha, and, on the contrary, secured his friendship by presenting him with looking-glasses, hatchets, and hawk's-bells, in return for which he obtained guides and porters from among this Cacique's people, and was enabled to prosecute his journey.

Following Poncha's guides, Vasco Nuñez and his men commenced the ascent of the mountains, until he entered the country of an Indian Chief called Quarequa, whom they found fully prepared to resist them. The brave Indian advanced at the head of his troops, intending to make a vigorous attack; but they could not withstand the discharge of the fire-arms. Indeed, they believed the Spaniards to have thunder and lightning in their hands—not an unreasonable fancy,—and, flying in the utmost terror from the place of battle, a total rout ensued. The rout was a bloody one, and is described by an author, who gained his information from those who were present at it, as a scene to remind one of the shambles.<sup>1</sup> The King and his principal men were slain, to the number of six hundred. Speaking of these people, Peter Martyr makes mention of the sweetness of their language, saying that all the words in it might be written in Latin letters, as was also to be remarked in that of the inhabitants of Hispaniola. This writer also mentions, and there is reason

Nuñez would have naturally chosen to ascend the Atrato, which flows directly north and south, rather than have sailed some distance north-west before attempting to cross. "The direct march to the Gulf of San Miguel, from which course a deviation would have almost doubled the distance, is another evidence of his having obtained the most reliable information."

<sup>1</sup> "Even as animals are cut up in the shambles, so our men, following them, hewed them in pieces, from one an arm, from another a leg, here a buttock, there a shoulder."—PETER MARTYR, dec. 3, cap. 1.

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for thinking that he was correctly informed, that there was a region, not two days' journey from Quarequa's territory, in which Vasco Núñez found a race of black men, who were conjectured to have come from Africa, and to have been shipwrecked on this coast.<sup>1</sup>

Leaving several of his men, who were ill, or over-weary, in Quarequa's chief town, and taking with him guides from this country, the Spanish Commander pursued his way up the most lofty sierras there, until, on the 25th of September 1513, he came near to the top of a mountain from whence the South Sea was visible. The distance from Poncha's chief town to this point was forty leagues, reckoned then six days' journey, but Vasco Núñez and his men took twenty-five days to accomplish it, as they suffered much from the roughness of the ways and from the want of provisions.

A little before Vasco Núñez reached the height, Quarequa's Indians informed him of his near approach to the sea. It was a sight in beholding which for the first time any man would wish to be alone. Vasco Núñez bade his men sit down while he ascended, and then, in solitude, looked down upon the vast Pacific,<sup>2</sup>—the first man of the Old World, so far as we know, who had done so. Falling on his knees, he gave thanks to God for the favour shown to him, in his being permitted to discover the Sea of the South. Then with his hand he beckoned to his men to come up. When they had come, both he and they knelt down and poured forth their thanks to God. He then addressed them in these words: "You see here, gentlemen and children mine, how our desires are being accomplished, and the end of our labours. Of that we ought to be certain, for,

<sup>1</sup> [PETER MARTYR is the only writer who refers to these negroes; the incident is not mentioned by Las Casas, Pascual de Andagoya, Oviedo, or Herrera. It has been suggested that Peter Martyr was mistaken in the date; in after years there were plenty of escaped negroes from the Spanish settlements.]

<sup>2</sup> [However, no part of the ocean was called the Pacific until some years later. The Spaniards called that part known to them the South Sea because it lay to the south of the discoverer's point of departure. Perhaps 1530 marks the earliest use of the name Pacific as applied to the southern portion of the ocean.]

as it has turned out true what King Comogre's son told of this sea to us, who never thought to see it, so I hold for certain that what he told us of there being incomparable treasures in it will be fulfilled. God and his blessed Mother who have assisted us, so that we should arrive here and behold this sea, will favour us that we may enjoy all that there is in it."

Afterwards they all devoutly sang the "Te Deum Laudamus"; and a list was drawn up, by a notary, of those who were present at this discovery, which was made upon St. Martin's Day.<sup>1</sup>

Every great and original action has a prospective greatness, not alone from the thoughts of the man who achieves it, but from the various aspects and high thoughts which the same action will continue to present and call up in the minds of others to the end, it may be, of all time. And so a remarkable event may go on acquiring more and more significance. In this case, our knowledge that the Pacific, which Vasco Nufiez then beheld, occupies more than one-half of the earth's surface, is an element of thought which in our minds lightens up and gives an awe to this first gaze of his upon those mighty waters. To him the scene might not at that moment have suggested much more than it would have done to a mere conqueror: indeed, Peter Martyr likens Vasco Nufiez to Hannibal showing Italy to his soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

Having thus addressed his men, Vasco Nufiez proceeded to take formal possession, on behalf of the kings of Castille, of the sea and of all that was in it; and, in order to make memorials of the event, he cut down trees, formed crosses, and heaped up stones. He also

<sup>1</sup> "Andrés de Valderrábano, notary . . . says that there are in all seventy-seven men, being the first Christians who ever looked upon the South Sea."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "As Hannibal showed his soldiers Italy and the promontories of the Alps, so he promised his associates a great reward for their labours past."—PETER MARTYR, dec. 3, cap. 1.

[Mr Bancroft (*op. cit.* p. 360) notices that even to-day the climate and natural difficulties, besides the hostility of the Indians, still untamed, render the passage of the Isthmus impracticable to explorers, and that within the present reign Queen's officers and seamen have been forced back, beaten in the attempt.]

inscribed the name of the monarchs of Castille upon great trees in the vicinity.

Descending the sierras, he entered the territory of an Indian Chief called Chiapes. The Indians here, trusting to their numbers, were disposed to make a valorous resistance, but were very soon put to flight. Vasco Nuñez sent messengers to Chiapes with overtures of peace, which being accepted by the Indian Chief, he came, to the camp, bringing four hundred *pesos* of gold, and was graciously received by the Spanish Commander, who in return presented him with the usual showy trifles which were given to the Indians. With such presents Vasco Nuñez, having gratified the Indians he had brought from Quarequa's country, sent them back. This conduct was very politic; it conciliated and reassured the Indians thus sent back; it gave confidence to the fresh ones who accompanied him; and it prevented him from being overburdened with Indians, who might rather impede than advance the march. In truth, throughout this expedition, Vasco Nuñez seems to have acted with great sagacity.

While he was in the town belonging to Chiapes, he sent on Francisco Pizarro, Alonso Martin, and others, to find the shortest way to the sea-shore. Alonso Martin was the first to discover it. He then descended to the shore, and found two canoes lying high and dry in a place where he could perceive no sea. At this he was astonished; but, the sea making its appearance and gradually advancing to the canoes, he entered one of them, begging his companions to bear witness that he was the first to float upon that sea. Pizarro and Alonso Martin returning with their intelligence, Vasco Nuñez himself went down to the shore, accompanied by eighty of his men. He entered the sea up to his thighs, having his sword on, and with his shield in his hand: then he called the bystanders to witness how he touched with his person and took possession of this sea for the kings of Castille, and declared that he would defend the possession of it against all comers.<sup>1</sup>

After this Vasco Nuñez made friends, in the usual manner, first conquering and then negotiating with the

<sup>1</sup> [On 29th September 1513,—St. Michael's Day, whence the name Golfo de San Miguel.]



next Indian Chief, named Coquera, who brought him a present of gold.

But, amongst all the Indian chiefs into whose good graces Vasco Nuñez fought or negotiated himself, there was no one who seems to have felt so much friendship for him as Chiapes. Vasco Nuñez, whose energy was inexhaustible, who "could not be quiet even while his bread was being baked,"<sup>1</sup> resolved to navigate a certain gulf in those parts, to which he gave the name of San Miguel, a name it still retains. The friendly Cacique, Chiapes, endeavoured to dissuade Vasco Nuñez from this enterprize, on account of the danger at that time of the year; but not succeeding, the Cacique resolved to go with his friend and to share the peril. Vasco Nuñez declared that God would assist them in their attempt, for that much service to God and increase of the Faith would arise from this voyage, by means of the great treasures which, he said, had to be discovered to enable the kings of Castille to make war against the infidels. Vasco Nuñez found the navigation of the gulf very hazardous, and nearly lost his life there. With great difficulty he made his way to the country of a Chief called Tumaco, in a corner of the gulf. This Chief sought to resist the invaders; but the Spaniards easily vanquished him, as usual; and Chiapes sent messengers to Tumaco, telling him how fearful the Spaniards were to their enemies, how gracious to their friends. Chiapes lived to tell another story. But Tumaco was incredulous: he had received a wound in his battle with the Spaniards, and he sent his son to them instead of going himself. The son, however, being well treated, Tumaco found courage to come in person, and, being kindly received by Vasco Nuñez, this Indian Chief sent for ornaments of gold, and two hundred and forty large pearls, which he presented to the Spaniards. He also desired his people to fish for more. The Spaniards could hardly contain their joy. One thing alone occurred to damp it. The Indians, not knowing better, were accustomed to open oysters by means of fire; this injured the colour of the pearl; and, accordingly, the Spaniards diligently taught the Indians the art of opening

<sup>1</sup> A proverb, I imagine, of that time, which Las Casas uses in reference to Vasco Nuñez.

oysters without fire, with far more diligence, indeed, than they expended in teaching their new friends any point of Christian doctrine.

It was said that this Cacique spoke of the riches of Peru to Vasco Nuñez; and there is something to countenance this in the report of the Spanish Commander's letter to the King, for he says, that he had learnt from Tumaco wonderful secrets of the riches of that land, which for the present he wished to keep to himself. Both Caciques, the friendly Chiapes and Tumaco, spoke to Vasco Nuñez of an island in the Gulf of San Miguel, ruled over by a powerful King who made incursions into their territories, and who possessed great pearls. Vasco Nuñez threatened fearful things against this King, and was anxious to go to the island, but his confederate Caciques persuaded him not to do so, on account of the dangers of the navigation at this season.

The Spanish Commander, after having given some attention to pearl fishing, resolved to return home to Darien, but by a different route from that which he had taken in coming. He now bade farewell to these friendly Caciques; and the simple Chiapes absolutely shed tears at the parting. Everywhere in the course of his way homewards, the Spaniard found obedient and hospitable Caciques. A fierce and brutal tyrant of the name of Pacra, who according to the account of Vasco Nuñez, had committed various injuries against his neighbours, was solemnly judged by the Spanish Commander, and, being condemned, was, with three of his lords, torn in pieces by the Spanish dogs. After staying some little time in Pacra's country, Vasco Nuñez moved on to Buchebuea's, where he was well received, and thence into the territory of Pocosora. This part of the Tierra-firme was divided into small caciquedoms, of which the government was truly a paternal one. To use the words of a soldier who was afterwards stationed here, and who was witness of the ceremonies at Pocosora's death "they lived in much justice, in the law of nature, without any ceremony or adoration" (*en mucha justicia, en ley de naturaleza, sin ninguna ceremonia ni adoracion*). Their caciques in person, like our kings of yore, judged causes; and their way of judging was to summon before them the parties in the cause, who had to give their own account of

the case. Then the caciques, without hearing witnesses, "holding it for certain that the parties would speak the truth (for he who lied to his lord immediately died for it), gave judgment, and there was an end of the matter."<sup>1</sup> The caciques had no tribute, but only personal service: for instance, when they were sowing, or building, or fishing, or carrying on war, all their vassals had to assist them, and they in return gave their vassals food and drink to make merry with (*por fiesta*). Death was the punishment for murder and for theft. They believed in witchcraft, and there were witches and wizards amongst them. Of their origin and history these Indians could give but little account; but they had some knowledge of a deluge, and of a man who had escaped in a canoe with his wife and children, and had peopled the earth; and that in Heaven there was a Lord who caused rain and all the other things which descend from above.

This is the description, the best, as far as I know (given by a soldier too, and not by a priest), that we have of the ways and thoughts of the Indians in that part of the Tierra-firme. It is easy to perceive that they were a people who might, without much difficulty, have been converted and civilized.

Pocorosa, at Vasco Nufiez's approach, took to flight; but afterwards returned, and was won over by Vasco Nufiez in the usual way. The Spanish Commander learnt that to get to Darien he must pass through Tubanamá's country. This was the much-dreaded Chieftain whom Comogre's son made mention of in his speech. Vasco Nufiez, by no means daunted at the rumours of Tubanamá's greatness, made a forced march with the best of his men, came upon Tubanamá's town suddenly by night, and captured him and his family. Adjoining to Tubanamá's abode was a hall of a hundred and twenty feet long and fifty broad, which served as a barrack for this Indian Chieftain's levies when he was about to make war. The town was a very scattered one, built so on purpose, to avoid the danger of hurricanes; and thus the Indians, before the Spaniards had time to secure them, were able to fly. The people from Pocorosa's country who had accompanied Vasco Nufiez, and

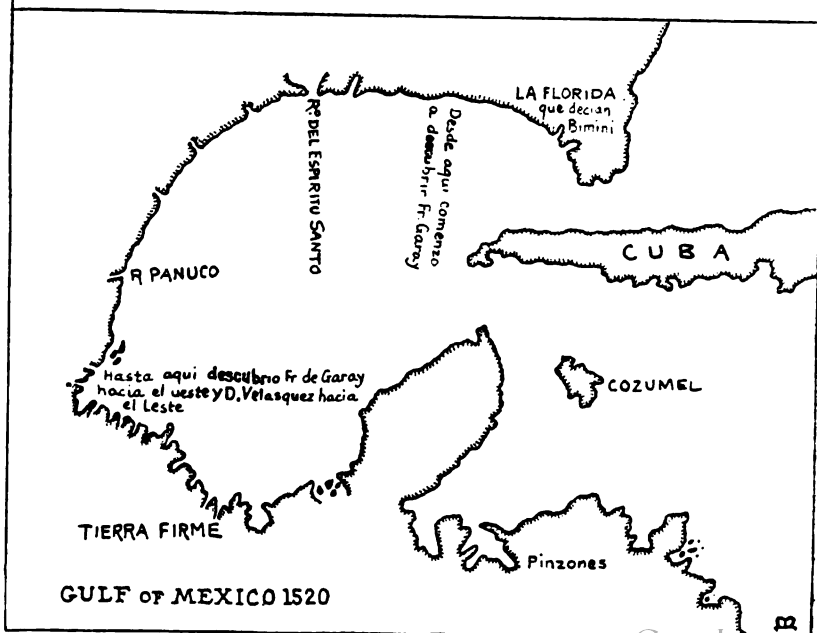
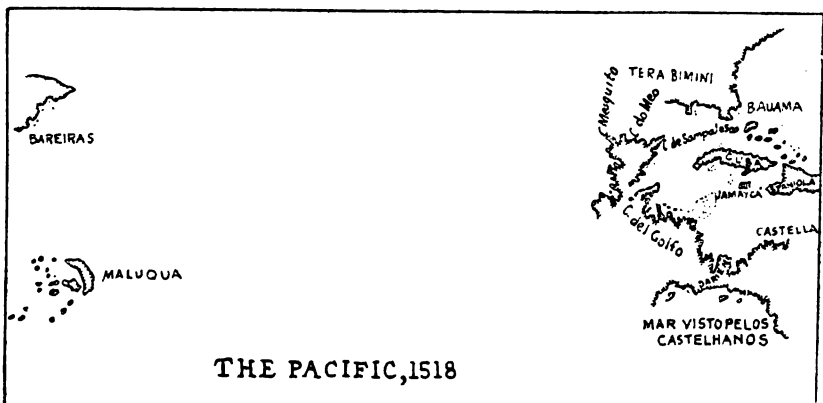
<sup>1</sup> PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA; NAVARRETE, *Coleccion*, iii, p. 399.

others who were enemies to Tubanamá, began to seek his destruction. He was represented to be another Pacra, and his neighbours mocked and rejoiced at his fall.

The Spanish Commander made a show of great severity towards Tubanamá, and ordered him to be brought out as if for death: saying that he would have him thrown into the river into which he heard that in former days Tubanamá had threatened that he would throw the Spaniards, if they should come that way. The Cacique with tears begged for his life, declaring that all that had been alleged against him, was said by the envy of enemies who were not able to subdue him, and that, as regarded the Spaniards, he had certainly never done them any harm: as for the threats attributed to him, such things might have been said by his chiefs, when drunk, for which he blamed them. Coming up to Vasco Núñez, and putting his hand upon his sword, he exclaimed, "Who that had any brains would contend against this *macana*, which at one blow can cleave a man in two?" He also promised to get much gold, if he were but released.

Vasco Núñez, who had never intended to put the Cacique to death, but who, doubtless, thought this a good opportunity of showing his own power, now softened his countenance and released Tubanamá, who caused about six thousand *pesos* worth of gold to be brought, all worked up into trinkets for women. Upon being questioned closely about the gold, he denied that it came from his territory; but Vasco Núñez, trying the ground, discovered that it was auriferous; and, accordingly, he resolved to found two settlements, one in Pocorosa's country, and another in Tubanamá's.

Ordering Tubanamá to collect gold and send it to him, Vasco Núñez quitted that Chieftain's territory, and, pursuing his course to Darien, came next to Comogra. The labours and the changes of climate he had endured, began to tell even upon the hardy Núñez; for we hear that he suffered now from fever, and was carried in a litter borne by Indians. In Comogra, where he had first received that intelligence which had been all-important to him, he must have felt as if almost at home. The old Chief was dead, but the eldest son, who had made that eloquent but unwise





speech, the cause of so much mischief, was reigning in his stead. By him Vasco Nuñez was hospitably entertained; and, doubtless, they had many things to hear from, and to tell each other. In a few days Vasco Nuñez, having recovered from the fever, pursued his way to Darien. As if to crown his good fortune, when he entered Poncha's territory, he found messengers from Darien to tell him, that two ships, well laden with provisions, had arrived from Hispaniola. Taking a chosen body of his men as an escort, he hastened onwards, and, on the 29th of January 1514, reached Darien, which he had quitted on the 1st of September 1513, this most important expedition having occupied not quite four months.

His men at Darien received him with exultation; and he lost no time in sending his news—"such signal and new news" (*tan señaladas y nuevas nuevas*) to the King of Spain, accompanying it with rich presents. His letter, which gave a detailed account of his journey, and which, for its length, was compared by Peter Martyr to the celebrated letter that came to the Senate from Tiberius, contained in every page thanks to God that he had escaped from such great dangers and labours. Both the letter and the presents were entrusted to a man named Arbolanche, who departed from Darien about the beginning of March 1514.<sup>1</sup>

In his letter to the King, Vasco Nuñez mentioned that he had not lost a man in these battles with the Indians. But, indeed, why should he have done so; for what was there in their simple weapons and innocent mode of warfare that could, unless by accident, destroy a well-armed man?

<sup>1</sup> [Arbolanche arrived in Spain just after the departure of Pedrarias; had he been a few weeks sooner, the course of events would have run much more favourably for Vasco Nuñez.]

## CHAPTER II

### THE GOVERNMENT UNDER PEDRARIAS, WITH THE VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS UNDERTAKEN BY HIS CAPTAINS

VASCO NUÑEZ'S messenger, Arbolanche, reached the court of Spain too late for his master's interests. It is probable that previously even to the arrival of Quicedo and Colmenares, who had brought such wonderful news about the discoveries in the Tierra-firme, the Spanish government had resolved to appoint a new governor.<sup>1</sup> And the news brought by the deputies from Darien served to heighten the importance of the appointment, and greatly to augment the numbers of the expedition. As all Spain was in a state of excitement at the idea of fishing up gold with nets, the appointment of Governor of Darien was much sought after; but, ultimately, was conferred upon the man whom the Bishop of Burgos favoured, namely Pedrarias de Avila.<sup>2</sup>

He was an elderly man of rank and high connections, of much repute in war, having served with honour in Africa; but in wisdom he does not seem to have been much superior to Bobadilla. From his feats in the tournament, he had acquired the name of "*Justador*," the jousting.

There is one thing to be said for the appointment of men of that age and station, which, if it occurred to King Ferdinand, would have been very likely to have had great weight with him. It is, that they are nearly sure to be faithful to their sovereign. It is too late to form great independent schemes of their own; but then they

<sup>1</sup> Quicedo and Colmenares reached Spain in May 1513: the date of Pedrarias's appointment is July 27, 1513, so that it is very probable, especially as Enciso and his complaints reached the court of Spain before these deputies, that the appointment of a governor was quite settled before they arrived.

<sup>2</sup> [Properly Pedro Arias de Avila.]



lack the lissomness of mind, as well as body, which is necessary in dealing with such entirely new circumstances as those which the Spanish captains in the New World had to encounter. I conjecture Pedrarias to have been a suspicious, fiery, arbitrary old man. "*Furor Domini*" was a name given him by the monks in after days; just as Attila enjoyed and merited the awful title of the "Scourge of God."<sup>1</sup>

Comogre's son had said that a thousand men would be necessary to make their way to the sea, and to obtain the riches which were there to be obtained. For greater safety twelve hundred was the number assigned to Pedrarias for his armament, and fifteen hundred was the number which went, for it happened that there was a great disbanding of troops at that time, and the men thus set free were anxious to enter the service of Pedrarias. The victory of Ravenna, gained by the French over the Spaniards and their allies, had alarmed King Ferdinand for his Neapolitan possessions: he had hastily raised levies which he intended to place under the command of the Great Captain, Gonsalvo de Córdoba; but, not finding it necessary to send succour to Naples, or being jealous of the Great Captain (which jealousy a perilous emergency had suppressed for a time) this expedition was abandoned.

When Pedrarias arrived at Seville, he found no fewer than two thousand young men eager to be enrolled in his forces, and "not a small number of avaricious old men," many of whom offered to go at their own expense. It was necessary, however, not to overload the ships, and therefore, many of these candidates were rejected. Amongst those chosen were several nobles. A Bishop also was appointed to the new colony, whose name was

<sup>1</sup> [One American historian (Mr. Fiske) calls him a "two-legged tiger"; another (Mr. Bancroft) says he was "coarse-grained throughout, the grizzled hair surrounding his dark features like the selfish and unholy nature that environed his swarthy soul." Mr. Justin Winsor points out that he succeeded in ruling where Nicuesa and Enciso failed. So far as the Spaniards were concerned Pedrarias was in the position of Tiberius, of holding a wolf by the ears, and no sympathy need be wasted on his fellow-countrymen; the story of his relation to the Indians will be read as the history progresses.]

Juan de Quevedo.<sup>1</sup> Four principal officers accompanied the Governor, namely, a treasurer, a factor, a contador, and a veedor.

Gonsalvo Hernandez de Oviedo, the celebrated historian, went out as Veedor in this expedition,<sup>2</sup> Gaspar de Espinosa as Alcalde Mayor, and as Alguazil Mayor the Bachiller Enciso, whose appointment boded no good to Vasco Nuñez.<sup>3</sup>

The instructions given to Pedrarias on this occasion still exist; and the introduction to them is so curious, and bears so closely on the present subject, that it will be desirable to give an account of it. After reciting in few words the discovery of the Tierra-firme, the document goes on to declare the motives for the expedition.

“And, in order that Our Lord may be served in the said lands, and His Holy Name made known, and the inhabitants of the aforesaid country converted to our sacred Catholic Faith, that they may be instructed in it and put in the way of salvation, and that there may not be lost such a number of souls as hitherto have perished, and in order that this design may have the effect which We desire, We have sent to beg our very Holy Father that he would provide prelates who may be ecclesiastical persons, learned and of good example, to go and teach and preach to these nations: and, for the security of these persons, it has been necessary to provide a certain number of people who should go and settle in the said lands, in order that, by the doctrine of these ecclesiastics, and by the means of conversion of the other Christians” (that is, by the communication between the Christians and the Indians) “the natives may more quietly, when converted to our Holy Faith, remain in it, until they shall be more capable of receiving Christian doctrine than it appears they now are.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [As Bishop of the town of Darien and the kingdom of Golden Castille.]

<sup>2</sup> [He succeeded Quicedo, or Caicedo, the envoy of Vasco Nuñez, who died at Seville before sailing. De Caicedo had been inspector of the treasure melting-houses of Tierra-firme.]

<sup>3</sup> [Bernal Diaz de Castillo, the historian, Pascual de Andagoya, whose “Relation” has been quoted here, Hernando de Soto, the discoverer, and Diego Almagro, also went out in the fleet.]

<sup>4</sup> [Among other orders was one to tolerate no lawyer in the colony.]

Considering what we know of the proceedings of this and other armaments, the foregoing extract may seem to be a mere pretence; but I do not think that it was so, and it entirely embodies the views of the men of that period. The Indians were to be converted to Christianity and formed in Christian polity, but these great ends could not be accomplished, at least as these Spanish statesmen and jurists thought, by doctrine alone, but needed also, they maintained, the daily intercourse of the Indians with a civilized people. The Indians were therefore, to have the benefit of the example and conversation of the Christians. The particular means, by which this conversion was to be effected, are given in another document of a later date, called the "Instruction by the King, to Pedrarias de Avila," in which the utmost tenderness towards the Indians is insisted upon. They are to be attached by good works to Christianity. They are to see that the Spaniards tell truth, that so they may have confidence in them. They are by no means to be made war against, unless they are the aggressors; and, as it will be the interest of the men under Pedrarias's command, that he should make war, to enable them to get slaves, "it appears to me," says the King, "that the soundest opinion, in reference to making war, will be that of the bishop and the Clerigos, as being freer from passion and motives of self-interest."<sup>1</sup>

The important question of *encomiendas*<sup>2</sup> is then touched upon. Three modes of dealing with this subject are suggested. First, the Indians may be given as personal servants, in which case the ordinances in their favour are to be carefully observed, and, far from being diminished in their humane tendency, are to be made more considerate. The shrewd King throws in a worldly reason for this. "If," he says, "in the island of Hispaniola the Indians have fled to the mountains to escape labours they were

<sup>1</sup> *Instruccion dada por EL REY á PEDRARIAS DAVILLA.* NAV., Col., iii, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> The words *repartimiento* and *encomienda* are often used indiscriminately by Spanish authors; but, speaking accurately, *repartimiento* means the first apportionment of Indians—*encomienda* the apportionment of any Spaniard's share which might become "vacant" by his death or punishment.—See ANTONIO DE LEON, *Confirmaciones Reales*, cap. 1.

unaccustomed to, they will be more able to do so in the *Tierra-firme*." The next plan would be (which is the one the King rather leans to), that the Spaniards should make use of the Indians by an agreement with them (*por via de paz y de concierto*); in which case the caciques, if there are such lords in those parts, will supply a part of the men under them to serve the Spaniards, a third, or a fourth, or a fifth of the people, to be changed every few months. If neither of these plans should be carried into effect, the Indians might be left to live as they were then living, but in that case they were to pay tribute.

So much for the system of *encomiendas* laid down by the King in this very wise and humane document.

With respect to making war upon the Indians, they were to be carefully informed and to have thorough notice (*entera noticia*) of the danger they would run from war being once commenced, namely, of those taken alive being made slaves. For this purpose a document had been framed by Dr. Palacios Rubios, a very learned jurist of that day, and a member of the Council—a document before quoted, but which it is desirable to present again to the reader.<sup>1</sup> It went by the name of *El Requerimiento* (the Requisition), and it ran thus:

"On the part of the King, Don Fernando, and of Doña Juana, his daughter, Queen of Castille and Leon, subduers of the barbarous nations, we their servants notify and make known to you, as best we can, that the Lord our God, Living and Eternal, created the Heaven and the Earth, and one man and one woman, of whom you and we, and all the men of the world, were and are descendants, and all those who come after us. But, on account of the multitude which has sprung from this man and woman in the five thousand years since the world was created, it was necessary that some men should go one way and some another, and that they should be divided into many kingdoms and provinces, for in one alone they could not be sustained.

"Of all these nations God our Lord gave charge to

<sup>1</sup> In the present affluence of books, few readers will take the trouble of making a reference: it is necessary, therefore, to repeat sometimes an important statement.

one man, called St. Peter, that he should be Lord and Superior of all the men in the world, that all should obey him, and that he should be the head of the whole human race, wherever men should live, and under whatever law, sect, or belief they should be ; and he gave him the world for his kingdom and jurisdiction.

“ And he commanded him to place his seat in Rome, as the spot most fitting to rule the world from ; but also he permitted him to have his seat in any other part of the world, and to judge and govern all Christians, Moors, Jews, Gentiles, and all other sects. This man was called Pope, as if to say, Admirable Great Father and Governor of men. The men who lived in that time obeyed that St. Peter, and took him for Lord, King, and Superior of the universe ” (imagine what Tiberius or Nero would have said to this assertion ! ) ; “ so also they have regarded the others who after him have been elected to the pontificate, and so has it been continued even till now, and will continue till the end of the world.

“ One of these Pontiffs, who succeeded that St. Peter as Lord of the world, in the dignity and seat which I have before mentioned, made donation of these isles and Tierra-firme to the aforesaid King and Queen and to their successors, our lords, with all that there are in these territories, as is contained in certain writings which passed upon the subject as aforesaid, which you can see if you wish.

“ So their Highnesses are kings and lords of these islands and land of Tierra-firme by virtue of this donation : and some islands, and indeed almost all those to whom this has been notified, have received and served their Highnesses, as lords and kings, in the way that subjects ought to do, with good will, without any resistance, immediately, without delay, when they were informed of the aforesaid facts. And also they received and obeyed the priests whom their Highnesses sent to preach to them and to teach them our Holy Faith ; and all these, of their own free will, without any reward or condition, have become Christians, and are so, and their Highnesses have joyfully and benignantly received them, and also have commanded them to be treated as their subjects and vassals ; and you

too are held and obliged to do the same. Wherefore, as best we can, we ask and require you that you consider what we have said to you, and that you take the time that shall be necessary to understand and deliberate upon it, and that you acknowledge the Church as the Ruler and Superior of the whole world (*por Señora y Superiora del universo mundo*), and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Doña Juana our lords, in his place, as superiors and lords and kings of these islands and this Tierra-firme by virtue of the said donation, and that you consent and give place that these religious fathers should declare and preach to you the aforesaid.

"If you do so, you will do well, and that which you are obliged to do to their Highnesses, and we in their name shall receive you in all love and charity, and shall leave you your wives, and your children, and your lands, free without servitude, that you may do with them and with yourselves freely that which you like and think best, and they shall not compel you to turn Christians, unless you yourselves, when informed of the truth, should wish to be converted to our Holy Catholic Faith, as almost all the inhabitants of the rest of the islands have done. And, besides this, their Highnesses award you many privileges and exemptions" (hard words in a New World!) "and will grant you many benefits.

"But, if you do not do this, and maliciously make delay in it, I certify to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country, and shall make war against you in all ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us. And that we have said this to you and made

this Requisition, we request the notary here present to give us his testimony in writing, and we ask the rest who are present that they should be witnesses of this Requisition."

If ever there was a document which it was worth while to give in full in such a narrative as the present, it is this Requisition, drawn up by the learned Doctor Palacios Rubios. The folly that spreads through it, when contrasted with the sagacity which pervades the instructions and the private letters of the King and the Council, is an illustration of how long foolish conceits linger in the halls of learning and among professions, even when they are beginning to be banished from the world at large. I must confess that the comicality of the document has often cheered me in the midst of tedious research, or endless details of small battles. The logic, the history, even the grammatical construction, are all, as it seems to me, alike in error. Stupendous assumptions are the staple of the document; and the very terms "Church," "privileges," "vassalage," "exemptions," are such as require a knowledge of Christianity and of the peculiar civilization of Europe for any one to understand. Then, when it is imagined how little these difficulties would be smoothed by translation, we may fancy what ideas the reading of the document, even when it was read, conveyed to a number of Indians sitting in a circle, and listening to European voices for the first time.

The above Requisition, however, which at least was meant to be very gracious to the Indians, was not necessarily to be used on all occasions. There were Indians who might be taken without even the reading of the Requisition. These were the Caribs, or cannibals. There is an especial paragraph in the instructions to Pedrarias devoted to these cannibals, in which that Governor is ordered to touch, if he can do so without delay or inconvenience, at the islands of the cannibals, which are, named Isla Fuerte, Isla de San Bernaldo, Santa Cruz, Guira, Carthagena, and Camarico de Gó. The inhabitants of these "islands" (Carthagena is not an island) are given as slaves because they were said to eat human flesh, and because of the injuries they were said to have done to the Spaniards, and to the other Indians.

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This is the weakest part, according to my judgment, of the whole of the policy of those who ruled over Indian affairs at the court of Spain. Who was to define cannibalism? And would not the modes of dealing with the cannibals necessarily spread to others? And would not any injuries, inflicted on the innocent, read in an official document, as if they were all justifiable, by the easy introduction of the word cannibal? I had come to the conclusion that cannibals and those who used poisoned arrows were sure to be set down as one and the same people, and I am confirmed by a stanza in the works of a poet and soldier of that age, Juan de Castellanos, where, speaking of some Caribs in the neighbourhood of Santa Martha, he says, that they were called Caribs, not because they ate human flesh, but because they defended their houses well.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that in these instructions it is ordered that, for the sake of being more entirely in the right, the Requisition should be read even before proceeding to capture cannibals, if the way of doing so can be found; but, if not, they might be captured without any of these formalities.

Furnished, however, with all these aids, with wise instructions, with this grotesque Requisition, probably with the thoughtful suggestions given in conversation by the King, or by the Bishop of Burgos, with an able staff of official men, amongst whom was one who had gained such experience of the country as the Bachiller Enciso, above all, with a gallant company of fifteen hundred men, armed well and well accoutred,<sup>2</sup> Pedrarias set sail with his men from the port of San Lucar, in twelve or fifteen vessels,<sup>3</sup> on the 12th of April 1514. This was one of the greatest expeditions sent out to the Indies in those times, and it cost the King of Spain a very large outlay. Had it been

<sup>1</sup> " Mas al fin fueron á provincia llana  
Que llamaron Caribes, tierra rasa,  
No porque allí comiesen carne humana,  
Mas porque defendian bien su casa."

*Elegias*, parte 2, canto 3.

<sup>2</sup> " The best equipped company that had ever left Spain," says one of them, PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA.

<sup>3</sup> PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA says nineteen vessels: every other account that I have seen makes the number of the vessels smaller.



under the command of a wise and great man like Columbus, or even of a great commander like Cortes or Vasco Nuñez, it might have been the beginning of a wise colonization of South America. But great means seldom come into great hands, or, perhaps, the world would advance too fast; while, on the contrary, the most important and successful experiments are often made, like those of renowned inventors in mechanics or chemistry, with few, shabby, and ill-fitting materials.<sup>1</sup>

The armament under Pedrarias was at its first outset driven back by a great storm, and obliged to refit, but afterwards met with little disaster, and not with much adventure, in the course of its voyage. The Governor had an early opportunity of manifesting the severity of his character, as for a comparatively slight act of disobedience he caused one of his own attendants to be hanged, and thus created terror throughout the fleet, for it was justly argued that if he was so severe upon one of his own men, without even going through the ordinary forms of law, what would he not do with the others, each of whom it behoved to look carefully how "he planted his foot."<sup>2</sup> Before reaching Darien, they entered the harbour of Santa Martha on the mainland, where Colmenares (who knew something of the Caribbean language), together with an Indian interpreter, undertook to confer with the Indians of that coast. But, in truth, these Indians "did not understand them better than a Biscayan talking Basque could make himself intelligible to a person speaking German or Arabic, or any other strange language."<sup>3</sup> The Indians, who were now well aware of the nature of their visitors, entering into the sea as

<sup>1</sup> [Various inducements were offered to settlers going to Tierra-firme—free grants of land, allotments of Indians, the enjoyment of all mines for ten years subject to a payment of one-fifth of the produce to the crown, and the right to send home the products of the country free of all duties. The eighteenth privilege promised that no lawyer should go to Tierra-firme for four years.]

<sup>2</sup> "That it behoved each one to look how he planted his foot, since by the way he treated his own servants it might be seen how he would punish others."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* lib. 29, cap. 6.

far as they could wade, discharged their poisoned arrows at the ships. The next day Pedrarias ordered an incursion to be made for the purpose of discovery and to secure some interpreters. He gave the command of the foray to his nephew.<sup>1</sup> As this was the first occasion in which the new Governor made use of his formidable Requisition, and as the historian Oviedo himself was employed in the foray, it is quite worth while to record the circumstance.

"The Governor," says Oviedo, "desired me to take the Requisition, and gave it to me from his own hand, as if I understood the Indians, or as if we should find any one there who would make them understand it, even if they were willing to listen."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, three hundred men-at-arms disembarked to form the escort of the Requisition; the preachers, about whom that document speaks so much, remained in the ships "to see what would happen."

The Spaniards commenced their "entry" in a disorderly manner: and the Indians, from time to time, made head against their pursuers. The historian himself, with a small party, found himself much pressed, and lost one of his men by a poisoned arrow. At last the Spaniards succeeded in gaining the heights, and capturing some Indian women. The contest, however, must have been more stoutly maintained than was expected, for on the ensuing morning the Governor joined his nephew with a thousand men-at-arms. A singular scene then ensued. They came to a deserted *pueblo*, in one of the houses of which the principal Spanish officers took up for the moment their quarters—namely, the Governor, his Lieutenant Juan de Ayora, the Contador, the Factor, and the Alcalde Mayor.

Oviedo, who probably felt that this foray had been made in a very questionable manner, and that he, as the man entrusted with the Requisition, might be compromised by such modes of proceeding, took occasion to to say, in the presence of all of them, "My Lords, it appears to me that these Indians will not listen to the

<sup>1</sup> [Bearing the same name.]

<sup>2</sup> OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 7.

theology of this Requisition, and that you have no one who can make them understand it: would your Honour be pleased to keep it until we have some one of these Indians in a cage, in order that he may learn it at his leisure, and my Lord Bishop may explain it to him?" "I gave him the Requisition," the historian adds, "and he took it with much laughter, both on his part and from all those who heard me."<sup>1</sup>

Shortly afterwards a skirmish ensued between the Spaniards and the Indians: a cannon was fired, the dogs were let loose, the Indians fled, and the Spaniards returned to their ships.

Oviedo took occasion afterwards to give an account of this day's adventure to Doctor Palacios Rubios, the author of the Requisition, who, however, did not do otherwise than the rest of the world, nor omit to laugh at these proceedings on the coast of Santa Martha. If our own age did not abound in things as remote from all common-sense as this Requisition, we should wonder how such a folly could ever have been put forward, or even acquiesced in, by persons of such intelligence as those who surrounded the Spanish court.

Before the expedition re-embarked, it appears that Pedrarias let some of the captives go free. As yet, perhaps, the King's orders to be kind to the Indians were not forgotten. Pursuing its course westward the expedition touched at the Isla Fuerte, and afterwards, entering the Gulf of Urabá, made its way to the new settlement of Santa Maria de la Antigua del Darien.

Immediately on the arrival of the fleet in the Gulf of Urabá, Pedrarias sent a messenger to Vasco Nufiez to inform him of his arrival. The messenger did not find Vasco Nufiez surrounded by any of the usual signs of power and splendour, but clothed in a cotton shirt, loose drawers and sandals, overlooking and helping some Indians to put a straw thatch on a house. On hearing the message, Vasco Nufiez, who had no doubt well considered his part, sent a respectful welcome to the New Governor, and said that the colonists were ready to receive him. The little colony now consisted of four hundred and fifty soldiers,

<sup>1</sup> OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 7.

men inured to danger, and, to use the expressive words of the original, "tanned with labours." It is said that there was much discussion amongst them as to how they should receive Pedrarias; and the historian Herrera thinks, but not justly, as it seems to me, that these four hundred and fifty men could have mastered the fifteen hundred, whom Pedrarias brought with him. In a month's time this might have been so; but at present these fifteen hundred men, being chosen persons, full of hope and confidence, admirably equipped, and with the terror of the King's name, would have scattered Vasco Núñez's men like chaff before the wind. Vasco Núñez's counsels of peace prevailed; and it was agreed that they should go out unarmed, and in the peaceful dress of magistrates, not of soldiers. The new colonists therefore—one of them certainly with a heavy heart, but all with apparent joyfulness,—came out to meet their countrymen, singing the "Te Deum." Pedrarias landed and billeted his men. This was on the 30th of June 1514.

It is a custom, I believe, even in our own times, that in some departments the minister coming in should have a long conference with the minister going out, and, if this is requisite in settled countries, it was far more so in those new-found states, where the inhabitants, the climate, the provisions, the geography, and the mode of warfare were all unknown to the new-comers. On the day after his arrival, Pedrarias summoned Vasco Núñez to his presence,<sup>1</sup> and, with gracious words respecting the appreciation of Vasco's services which was now entertained at court, requested him to give an exact account of this new land, and of the men who inhabited it. Vasco Núñez replied fittingly to this courtesy, and promised to give an account in writing, which he did in the course of two days, and which contained the whole narrative of his administration that had now continued for three years. He also described the rivers, fissures (*quebradas*) and mountains where he had found gold, the caciques he had made allies of (these were more than twenty), and his journey of discovery to the South Sea and to the "Rich Isle," as it was called, of

<sup>1</sup> OVIEDO was present at this interview.—See *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 7.

pearls. It is probable that Vasco Nufiez may, on this occasion, have given some account of what he supposed to be the population of Darien, which is stated to have been above two millions.<sup>1</sup>

The first thing after this to be done, was to take the *residencia* of Vasco Nufiez, the result of which was, that for the injuries done to Enciso and others, he was condemned to pay several thousand *castellanos*, and was put into confinement, but afterwards, in consideration of his services, was set free.

The next thing was to prepare to make settlements in the territories of Comogre, Poncha, and Pocorosa, as Vasco Nufiez had written to advise the King, when he was suggesting the expedition to discover the South Sea. While preparation was being made for these expeditions, Pedrarias's people began to fall ill. The situation of Darien was very unhealthy, and the new-comers not only suffered from the effects of the climate, but from those of sheer hunger. On disembarking, the provisions brought by the fleet had been divided amongst the men, but the flour and the greatest part of the provisions were found to have been spoilt by the sea. The old colonists were not in any way prepared for such an accession to their numbers, and there were no neighbouring Indians who might assist in such an emergency. The expedition had thus sailed into the very jaws of famine.<sup>2</sup> Men clad in silks and brocades absolutely perished of hunger, and might be seen feeding like cattle upon herbage. One of the principal hidalgos went through the street, saying that

<sup>1</sup> "It is a truth that there were more than 2,000,000 Indians in that government at that time."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 9.

<sup>2</sup> OVIEDO gives another account of the cause of this famine, and one which is very discreditable to the King's officers. He says that there were plenty of provisions, but that the official persons, who suffered no deficiency of food themselves, showed very little pity to the rest. ("But as the officials sought the safety of the royal revenue, and they did not want food for themselves, they had little mercy for others."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 9.) They took out all the provisions, and put them in a large hut, which they called the "toldo" (pavilion), and he intimates that the mayordomos of this "toldo," very conveniently for their own purposes, set fire to it; but Oviedo, though a pious and strict man, was inclined to put the worst interpretation upon all that happened.

he was perishing of hunger, and in sight of the whole town dropt down dead. In less than a month seven hundred men perished. Pedrarias himself was taken ill, and by the advice of physicians went to a station at a little distance from the town. All these misfortunes delayed the sending out of the expeditions, and probably indisposed the minds of men for the adventure they had come upon.<sup>1</sup> They must have felt disappointed and desperate, and therefore were ready for any cruelty.

One of the first of his captains whom Pedrarias sent out was Juan de Ayora with four hundred men in a ship and three caravels, to get gold, and to make settlements by building fortresses in Comogre's country and in that of Pocorosa and Tubanamá. Juan de Ayora proved to be a terrible tyrant.<sup>2</sup> The friendly Caciques Comogre, Poncha, and Pocorosa, who had been very dutiful to Vasco Núñez, came with their gold to this new Spanish Chief; but their people were harassed and made slaves, and their wives were carried off. The same thing happened to Tubanamá, who, being more valorous and powerful, took to arms, but without avail. Juan de Ayora sought to deal with a Cacique called Sacativa, as he had done with the rest; but this Indian Chief, whose territories were on the sea-shore, having put the women and children in safety, deserted his town, and lay hid in ambuscade. When the Spaniards landed, he made an attack upon them, and wounded Juan de Ayora, who resolved to revenge himself on Pocorosa's territory—where he had built a town called Santa Cruz—and would have done so on Pocorosa himself, had not a friendly Spaniard, named Eslava, warned the Cacique, who sought safety in flight.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the principal men were allowed to return to Spain, and they went to Cuba, as will afterwards be seen.

<sup>2</sup> OVIEDO sums up Ayora's proceedings in the following fearful words:—"In this expedition Juan de Ayora not only omitted the Requisitions and summoning it was his duty to make to the Indians before attacking them, but took them by surprise at night, torturing the caciques and chiefs, demanding gold from them. Some he roasted alive, some were thrown living to the dogs, some were hanged, and for others were devised new forms of torture. Their wives and daughters were made slaves and divided according to the pleasure of Juan de Ayora and the other captains."—*Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 9.

For this timely notice given by Eslava, when it was discovered, he narrowly escaped hanging at the hands of Juan de Ayora.

The Licentiate Zuazo, a distinguished lawyer who was sent by Cardinal Ximenes a few years afterwards to the West Indies, describes graphically the dealings of this Spanish Captain, Juan de Ayora, with one of the friendly caciques. On the approach of the Spaniards, the Indians, supposing it was their old friend Vasco Nufiez, made great preparations with roast meat, game, bread and wine to entertain him. When Juan de Ayora arrived, he and his men sat down to this repast. "But where is the Tiba?" said the Cacique (*tiba* was their name for chief), upon which Juan de Ayora was pointed out to him; but he replied, this was not the "Tiba," for he knew Vasco Nufiez well. The poor Cacique was soon to understand the difference more clearly; for after dinner Juan de Ayora sent for him, and ordered him to give gold, unless he wished to be burnt, or thrown to the dogs. The Cacique sent for a little gold that he had, and presented it. This did not satisfy the Spanish Captain. Then the wretched Cacique, who was bound, desired his vassals to bring all the gold that they had; but, when it was brought, Juan de Ayora was still dissatisfied with the quantity, and demanded more. The Cacique begged that the Spaniard would be content, as he had given all the gold he had; but Juan de Ayora, with all the relentless rage of a robber who finds smaller booty than he expected, caused the unhappy Indian to be burnt.<sup>1</sup> By such doings, or at least by the most wanton rapine, he succeeded in obtaining a large quantity of gold; but neither the King, nor Pedrarias, nor the expedition, was any the better for this gold, as Juan de Ayora took ship, and, furtively making off with all his ill-gotten plunder, was never heard of more in Darien. "In all the turmoils that have taken place beyond sea, nothing has displeased me so much as this man's avarice, which has thus disturbed the minds of the chiefs, who before were at peace with us." Thus does the honest and out-speaking Peter Martyr

<sup>1</sup> NAVARRETE, Y SALVA, *Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, tom. 2, p. 360.

express himself, who, although he was a friend to Pedrarias, did not hesitate to throw some suspicion in the matter upon that Governor, for which, however, there does not appear to be the slightest foundation.

As for Juan de Ayora's colony at Santa Cruz, it met with the fate which its founder and his doings deserved. The Spaniards there gave the greatest offence to the surrounding Indians. Pocorosa and his people came down upon the settlement in the dead of the night: the Indians and Spaniards had a desperate encounter, and when morning broke, there were only five left of the Spaniards, who, flying, bore the news of their defeat to Darien. The town of Santa Cruz was not in existence more than six months. There is an episode in this story of Juan de Ayora's expedition, which is very significant, and furnishes in itself almost a summary of the proceedings at Darien.

While Juan de Ayora was robbing and murdering in the manner above mentioned, his absence seemed somewhat protracted to those at Darien who were not so profitably employed. Accordingly the Bishop suggested to the Governor that they should send to see "what God had done with the Lieutenant, Juan de Ayora, of whom they had had no intelligence whatever." The person whom the Bishop suggested should be sent to see after Ayora, was no other than Bartolomé Hurtado, the great friend and ally of Vasco Núñez—which circumstance tends to show that some friendship had already sprung up between the Bishop and Vasco Núñez.

Hurtado set out upon his mission. He succeeded in finding Ayora, and returned before him, but he did not return empty-handed, for he brought back more than a hundred peaceable Indians (*Indios de paz*), whom he had stolen, and amongst them several whom he had merely borrowed from the friendly Cacique of Careta, as porters to carry burdens. Well aware how little his proceedings would bear enquiry, he sought at once to make powerful friends. He gave to the Governor six Indians; to the Bishop six Indians; to the Treasurer four; to the Contador four; the Factor four; and four to the Alcalde Mayor. This was the first instance of these high officers at Darien receiving such gratifications. Then the King's fifths were



paid; and the slaves who formed this portion, and who happened to be the men lent by Careta, were immediately disposed of by public sale, and branded. Most of them were afterwards carried across sea.<sup>1</sup> At last, after these gifts had been received, and dues had been paid, so that many persons were interested in declaring the original capture legal, out came the true story of how these Indians had been acquired, and it appeared—a thing almost too ludicrous to mention—that this famous Requisition had never been read to these wretched Indians, until they were actually led along as prisoners in chains, and beaten if they did not step along sufficiently fast.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, the element of comedy, which is never far from the most tragical of human events, was seldom closer to them than in this terrible Conquest of the Indies.

Oviedo has been supposed to be a hard and severe man, and one who was anything but friendly to the Indians, but we must do him the justice to believe that he was thoroughly shocked at the proceedings in Darien, and that it was from the best motives that he resolved to return to Spain, for the purpose of giving information to the King, and, as he expresses it, “to live in a country more secure for my conscience and my life.”<sup>3</sup> His pretexts for going

<sup>1</sup> “Who were immediately sold by auction and branded, most of them being carried over sea to other parts.”—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 9.

<sup>2</sup> “It appears that they had been suddenly pounced upon and bound before they had learnt or understood anything about Pope or Church, or any one of the many things said in the Requisition; and that after being put in chains some one read the Requisition without knowing their language and without any interpreter, and without either reader or Indians understanding what was read. And after this had been explained to them by some one understanding their language, they had no chance of reply, being immediately carried away prisoners, the Spaniards not failing to use the stick on those who did not go fast enough.”—*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> [Also Oviedo hated Pedrarias, which was perhaps a factor in the development of his humanity. In 1601 the lineal descendant of Pedrarias commenced legal proceedings against Don Antonio de Herrera, the first two volumes of whose *Historia General* were published in that year, and who had based his account on those of Las Casas and Oviedo. The proceedings brought to light much interesting historical material, but disproved nothing essential of the earlier relations.]

were the state of his health and a wish to see his wife. After being obliged to submit to a *residencia*, in the course of which no charge was preferred against him, he was allowed to depart. The account of the colony which he had to carry back to the King was fearful, and did not depend upon his own testimony alone. The Governor sent word home by Oviedo what a hindrance the Bishop was to good government, and how covetous and insolent of tongue he was, and how unruly and dishonest were his *clerigos*.<sup>1</sup> The Bishop, on his side, charged Oviedo to inform the King of the Governor's "avarice and inconstancy," and of the peculations of the Alcalde Mayor. It will, hereafter, be seen that the Governor and the Bishop appreciated each other's faults with nice discrimination.

The Bishop very urgently begged the historian to inform the King what a good and skilful servant His Highness had in Vasco Nuñez.

There was one slight circumstance which Oviedo could have mentioned (and probably did so) against both the Governor and the Bishop, and which alone was fatal to anything like good government in the colony: it was that they were in the habit of letting their young men, their negroes, and their dogs<sup>2</sup> accompany the expeditions that were sent out, and receive the due apportionment of the spoil<sup>3</sup> for their masters.

<sup>1</sup> OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 9. [A band of Franciscans had come out with Pedrarias and the Bishop.]

<sup>2</sup> The reader must not be surprised at the dogs receiving their share. Vasco Nuñez had a dog called Leonçico, who always received his share of gold and slaves; and his instinct was said to be such, that he could distinguish between an "Indio de guerra" and an "Indio de paz"—a distinction which was often overlooked by his Spanish friends. "Similarly we must mention a dog Vasco Nuñez possessed, called Leonçico, a son of the dog Becerrico, of the island of San Juan, and no less famous than his parent. This dog gained for his master altogether more than 2000 pesos of gold, because he was given the share of a comrade in the distribution of gold and slaves. . . . This dog's instinct was wonderful; he could distinguish between the warlike and the peaceful warrior."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 3.

[Herrera says of the father dog, Becerrico, "He (Juan Ponce de Leon) had a dog called Becerrico, who made wonderful havoc among those people . . . and therefore he had one share and a half of all that was taken allowed him, as well in gold as slaves and other things, as was done to one that carried a crossbow."]

<sup>3</sup> "That the main reason why expeditions were sent all over the

The next enterprise worth mentioning is that which Pedrarias entrusted to the Bachiller Enciso, sending him into the territory of Cenú. The Bachiller, as a man learned in the law, could not comport himself after the fashion of rude captains, but, before making any attack upon the Indians, he duly read to them that long Requisition which is now well known to the reader. It may be noticed, I think, in the course of this narrative, that the men of education always behave a little better than the rest. Enciso's account of the effect of reading this Requisition (which he gives in a simple, innocent way), is very interesting. Making his appeal to two of the caciques of Cenú, he tells them the whole story of the world, as written in the Requisition—How there was one God, Three and One, who governed the Heavens and the Earth: and how He had come into the world and had left in his place Saint Peter; and how Saint Peter had left, as successor, the Pope, as Lord of the universe; and how, as such Lord, the Pope had given this land of the Indies and Cenú to the King of Castille. All this being premised, it was easy to show that obedience was to be instantly rendered to him, the Bachiller Enciso, as one of the captains of the King of Castille. But the Caciques took an objection, to use a lawyer's phrase, to Enciso's history. "They replied to him," he tells us, "that, with respect to what I said about there being but one God, and that He governed the Heaven and the Earth, and was Lord of all things, that it seemed good to them, and so it must be; but that in what I said about the Pope being the Lord of all the universe in the place of God, and that he had given the land of the Indies to the King of Castille, the Pope must have been drunk when he did it, for he gave what was not his<sup>1</sup>; also that the King, who asked for, or received, this gift, must be some madman (*algun loco*), for that he asked to have that given him which belonged to

country was the interest of the governor, bishop, and officials in obtaining shares in the Indians taken and in the gold; and in sending their young men, negroes, and dogs to receive their shares of the Indians for their masters."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 9.

<sup>1</sup> ENCISO, *Suma de Geographia*.

others; and they added, that should he come there to take it, they would put his head on a stake. They were lords of this country, and there was no need of any other."

Upon this bold answer, Enciso proceeded in his formal way to expound to them the threatenings of the Requisition; to which they only replied, that they would put his head on a stake—a threat which, he says, they tried to carry into effect, but he was too strong for them, and put them to flight, though they made a vigorous resistance. Afterwards he captured one of these Caciques; and Enciso mentions, that the Cacique was a man of much truth, who kept his word, and that evil seemed to him evil, and good, good; by which the Bachiller means, that they thought alike on many points of law and morality. To us, who are bystanders as it were, it seems a sad pity to have destroyed by force the polity which had brought such a man as this Cacique to the head of affairs in his tribe; and we cannot help thinking that the speech of the two Caciques of Cenú, stripped of its rudeness, was somewhat of an answer to the demands of both Pope and King.

No further information is given by Enciso of this expedition to Cenú; and it needed not his silence to convince us of the unprofitable nature of the undertaking.

Amongst other expeditions fitted out by Pedrarias, there is one which deserves mention, and at the head of which was a certain Gaspar de Morales.<sup>1</sup> This Captain was sent to the South Sea, to find pearls in the islands called Tezaregui, situated in the Gulf of San Miguel—the chief island being that one renowned for pearls, which Vasco Nufiez, after discovering the South Sea, was anxious to visit, but had been dissuaded from doing so by his friend Chiapea. The force which Gaspar de Morales had at his command consisted of eighty men—that is, eighty Spaniards, for in all these expeditions there was generally a numerous retinue of Indians.

On his way to the Gulf of San Miguel, Morales met with another of the captains of Pedrarias, named Becerra, who was laden with gold, and accompanied by slaves

<sup>1</sup> [In 1515.]

taken from the territories of those caciques who had been friendly to Vasco Nuñez, and who had received Becerra, as if he, too, were a friend. The names given by the Spaniards to the caciques whose territories this Becerra had ravaged, are sufficient indication of the nature of his ravages. One was called *el Suegro*, the father-in-law, and another *el Quemado*, the burnt one. The explanation of these names is as follows: the *Suegro* had three or four daughters who were carried off, and the *Quemado* was burnt because he did not give as much gold as the Spaniards demanded of him.<sup>1</sup> Morales pursued a like system of devastation with that of Becerra, gleaning what spoil he could after the devastation made by his brother officer. On one particular occasion—which may serve to illustrate the proceedings of Morales,—he and his men came upon an Indian town in the midst of some festivity. It was the custom in these festivals for the men and the women to sit apart. The followers of Morales thought this a good opportunity for capturing female prisoners; they, therefore, seized the Indian women present, and carried them off, the men making the most desperate efforts to rescue their wives and daughters, but without avail. This mode of converting the Indians to Christianity—for we must recollect that, according to the tenor of King Ferdinand's instructions, it was to protect missionaries that these bands of armed men were employed—naturally aroused the most deadly hatred in the Indians. They formed a great conspiracy to destroy Morales, in which no fewer than twenty caciques were engaged. Unfortunately, amongst the conspirators there was a Cacique accompanying the principal body of Spaniards, for at that time they happened to be divided into two or three parties. This Cacique was informed of the partial success of the conspiracy, that is, of the Indians having

<sup>1</sup> "This Cacique bore the name of father-in-law, because, when the Christians came there, they took (or he gave them, from fear) three or four daughters among the captains, and on account of this unwilling hospitality, they dubbed him 'The Father-in-law,' but his real name was Mahe. The other Cacique they called 'The Burnt One,' because, actually and without cause, they burnt him because he did not give as much gold as they demanded."—OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 10.



destroyed ten Spaniards who were separated from the main body, upon which he instantly fled during the night. Morales, with his suspicions awakened by this sudden flight, ordered pursuit to be made after the fugitive Cacique, who, being taken, and the torture being applied to him, confessed what he knew. By means of the intelligence thus obtained, the Spanish Commander was enabled to defeat the plans of the conspirators. Falling at daybreak upon the united forces of the Indians, when they were quite unprepared for such an attack, he put them to flight, and, afterwards capturing twenty caciques, he destroyed them by giving them to his dogs to tear to pieces. All this took place on the return of Morales from the islands to which he had been sent, where he had been received in the most friendly manner, and had obtained a great number of most valuable pearls.

By the failure of this conspiracy and the slaughter of the caciques, Morales probably felt more at his ease, and, instead of returning at once to Darien, he directed his course to the territories of a Cacique called Birú, at the eastern end of the Gulf of San Miguel. This Cacique was said to be very warlike and very rich. It is conjectured to have been from a corruption of his name that the great kingdom of Peru was so called.<sup>1</sup>

In such a case as this, where a warlike chief was to be attacked, it is not probable that the reading of the Requisition was a very public and formal one. Indeed, Las Casas says, that, in general, the Spaniards approached the Indian towns, marching silently, and halting about midnight, when those primeval forests must have been witnesses to strange scenes. For then they read to themselves and to the trees that Requisition, no doubt muttering very fast the well-known words, "Caciques and Indians of the town of so and so, we give you to know how there is one God, &c. &c.; and how he left our holy Pope as universal Lord, &c. &c.; and how the holy Pope gave to the kings of Castille," &c. &c.; and thus, having gabbled through the document, they resumed silence, until they burst upon the

<sup>1</sup> [According to others, Birú was the name of his district, and of a small river. The derivation is not universally accepted.]

Indian town with the cry of "Santiago," a word which I do not find in the Requisition, though it is the word which must often have been the first and the only Spanish one the Indians lived to hear.

The warlike Cacique Birú, though he was attacked by night and his town was set fire to, did not give himself up as conquered. He fled at first, but then turned upon the Spaniards, and fought with them for a whole day, the result appearing doubtful. The Spaniards were at last victorious, but it was too hardly earned a victory to profit much by, and they did not stay in Birú's country. Meanwhile the people of the twenty slaughtered caciques united together, and pressed Morales hard, as he was making his way back to Darien. To free himself, the Spanish Commander had recourse to a most cruel expedient. He stabbed his Indian captives at intervals as he went along, hoping thus to occupy the pursuing Indians. This incident is alluded to in becoming terms of indignation by Vasco Nufiez, now a critical observer of other men's doings, in a letter to the King, where he says that a more cruel deed was never heard of among Moors, Christians, or any other people.<sup>1</sup> Oviedo speaks of this transaction as an "Herodian cruelty," and states that ninety or a hundred persons perished through it.<sup>2</sup> However atrocious, it seems to me to be surpassed by many of the transactions in the Tierra-firme, and it had at least the justification of being done in self-defence. At last Morales and his men, having fought their way with immense valour, if such a word can be justly applied to the proceedings of such men, and having had the most frightful difficulties and sufferings to contend with from the nature of the country they passed through, reached Darien. Pizarro was in this expedition, and seems to have been employed as second in command. It was a

<sup>1</sup> NAV., *Col.*, iii, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> "They determined to behead in turn all the Indians who were captive and bound, not sparing woman or child, big or little, imitating the Herodian cruelty, that the Indians who were attacking them, seeing this grievous spectacle, might be delayed. And so in this way ninety or one hundred people were beheaded."—OVIDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 10.

terrible school which the future conqueror of Peru was brought up in.

The Governor of Darien continued to send out expeditions such as those of Morales, which are painful to read of, and tiresome to relate, and which, when they brought back much gold and many slaves, were still, even in the views of statesmen of that time, unfortunate, as they founded nothing, and led to nothing except to a profound hatred in those parts, of the name and nation of the Spaniards.

The next expedition of note that Pedrarias sent out was led by Becerra, the same man whom Morales met, when commencing his expedition to the Pearl islands, and who had already distinguished himself by the ravages he had made in the territories of the caciques formerly in strict alliance with Vasco Nufiez. Becerra was not only well furnished with men, but carried with him all the apparatus of war; amongst which were pieces of artillery capable of throwing large balls, large for that time at least, "as big," we are told, "as an egg."<sup>1</sup> Becerra's destination was Cenú, a territory familiar to the reader as the scene of the Bachiller Enciso's singular conversation with the two Caciques. The reason why all this apparatus which Becerra carried with him was considered particularly requisite was, that he had to carry on war with the Caribs.<sup>2</sup> We know, however, that it effected no good result. After hearing so often of the destruction and dispersion of the Indians, that, in general, each story seems but a counterpart of the one that came before it, it is a comfort to find occasionally that they have a great success. It was so in this case. Not one of Becerra's men returned to tell the tale of the total destruction which this expedition met with. One Indian youth alone made his way back to Darien, half-dead with hunger; and he told the Governor of the fate of Becerra and his company.

The Indian's story was, that Becerra had entered by

<sup>1</sup> [Large for the colonies, not for Europe, where eighteen and thirty-six pounders were already in use.]

<sup>2</sup> "To make war upon the Cannibals in Caribana, their own dominion."—PETER MARTYR, dec. 3, cap. 10.



unknown ways into this province of Cenú, which Enciso with all legal forms had duly ravaged, and where, therefore, the Indians were fully prepared to receive such theological instruction as was commonly sent to them by the Bishop and the Governor of Darien. Accordingly, they wounded Becerra's men with poisoned arrows, they embarrassed the ways with felled timber, and finally, using the arts of dissimulation as well as of war, they contrived, when assisting Becerra's men to cross a great river, to destroy them all. It was one of the few chances still remaining for the Indians in their warfare, that it should be in or near water, in which element they were far more at home than the Spaniards were: and this exemplifies that complete saying of Napoleon upon the art of war, that it is "the art of being strongest on a given point at a given time."

The late expeditions had been so manifestly unsuccessful, that the Governor of Darien began to take the state of affairs much to heart. He ordered the melting-house, "*Casa de la Fundicion*," to be closed—a most clear signal of distress: he also, in conjunction with the Bishop, ordered public prayers to be offered up, that God might remove his anger from them. I do not find, however, that any change of policy took place in accordance with those prayers, unless it was that the next expedition, commanded by Gonzalo de Badajoz,<sup>1</sup> seems to have been sent out in a different direction from the other ones, namely, to Nombre de Dios, and thence to the South Sea. Badajoz behaved like the rest of the captains, and succeeded in obtaining an immense quantity of money (eighty thousand *castellanos*, it is said), but lost it all by the cunning device of an Indian Cacique, named Paris,<sup>2</sup> who contrived by false intelligence to direct the attention of Badajoz to another quarter, while he attacked and pillaged the station where Badajoz had left his gold. This expedition also must have returned to Darien in very disconsolate mood, and could not have brought much comfort to the Governor's mind.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [In March or May 1515.]

<sup>2</sup> [A corruption of the Spanish Pariza or Parizao.]

<sup>3</sup> [The expedition under Gonzalo de Badajoz was followed by one

The last that I shall mention, and one of the most memorable, of Pedrarias's expeditions, was that sent out under his Alcalde Mayor, Espinosa.<sup>1</sup> In this expedition there went a Franciscan monk, named Francisco de San Roman. He wrote a letter to Father Pedro de Córdova, the head of the Dominicans, in which the Father gave to Las Casas, and in which San Roman begged that Pedro de Córdova, for the love of God, would speak to the authorities at St Domingo, and put it as a matter of conscience to them to provide a remedy for the Tierra-firme which those tyrants were destroying. Afterwards the Franciscan returned to Spain, and, when he was at Seville in the college of San Tomás, of the order of the Dominicans, he stated that he had seen with his own eyes, killed by the sword, or thrown to savage dogs, in this expedition of Espinosa's, above forty thousand souls.<sup>2</sup> This seems almost incredible; but let no one doubt it, or imagine that he can realize to his mind what such an expedition would be capable of, until he has fully pictured to himself what his own nature might become, if he formed one of such a band, toiling in a new fierce clime, enduring miseries unimagined by him before, gradually giving up all civilized ways, growing more and more indifferent to the destruction of life—the life of animals, of his adversaries, of his companions, even his own,—retaining the adroitness and sagacity of man, and becoming fell, reckless, and rapacious as the fiercest brute of the forest. Not more different the sea, when some midsummer morning, it comes, with its crisp, delicate little waves, fondling up to your feet, like your own dog—and the same sea when, storm-ridden, it thunders

under Pedrarias himself, which reached Acla (see *post*, p. 292), when the Governor was stricken down by fever, and compelled to return to Darien. Part of the force was handed over to Espinosa for the following enterprise.]

<sup>1</sup> [It was preceded by an edict declaring outlaws, and liable to immediate death, all Indians in arms.]

<sup>2</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lrv, p. 223.

[But the clergy also joined in:—"I sent the Rev. Dean with one squad, and Ojeda with another to fight them; they brought back some Indians, the number of whom will appear in the division made of them."—Relation of GASPAR DE ESPINOSA, *Col. de Doc. Ined.* . . . *del Archivo de Indias*, ii, p. 467.]

in against you with foam and fury like a wild beast, than is the smiling, prosperous, civilized man, restrained by a thousand invisible fetters, who has not known real hunger for years, from the same man when he has starved and fought and bled, been alternately frozen and burnt up, and when his life in fact has become one mad, blinding contest with all around him.

Espinosa's expedition, however murderous, being composed of such men as have been just described, was not unsuccessful in the way in which success was then reckoned, for he recovered the gold which Badajoz had lost, and brought back eighty thousand *pesos*, and two thousand slaves. We are assured of this on the authority of an earlier historian than Las Casas,<sup>1</sup> whose words are as follows: "He, Espinosa, brought with him full two thousand captives, which, for carrying to Hispaniola, were then worth much money. Thence came that rapid as well as miserable diminution which these wretched nations suffered, since, from desire for the gold which the merchants gave for these slaves in Darien, all the time that they were outside the walls of that city, both those acquired in peace, as well as those taken in war, were put in irons."<sup>2</sup> Speaking probably of this same expedition of Espinosa's, one of the captains in it, Pascual de Andagoya, says, that they returned with such a number of slaves, that they were obliged to make two days' journey of such a short distance as three or four leagues; and he adds that "all this company of slaves perished at Darien, as did all the rest who were brought there."<sup>3</sup> This statement is inconsistent with that of Tovilla, just referred to: but I have no doubt that the contradiction between these two witnesses is but one of place; and that the truth is, that all the slaves in question perished rapidly, some at Darien and some at Hispaniola.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DIEGO DE LA TOVILLA, *Historia Barbárica*.—This writer is alluded to both by Las Casas and Herrera; but in modern times his work has not been seen. It would be a service to history to discover it.

<sup>2</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxx, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> NAV., *Col.*, iii, p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> [Espinosa, however, detached a body of men under Bartolomé Hurtado, who explored the coast of the Isthmus to the south, and

Throughout these expeditions in the *Tierra-firme*, which would else perhaps be as interesting as they are important, the reader is vexed and distracted by new and uncouth names of people and of places. The very words Rome, Constantinople, London, Genoa, Venice, stir the blood, and arrest the attention: any small incident in their fortunes enjoys some of the accumulated interest which is bound up with these time-honoured names; while it requires an effort of imagination to care about what may happen to Comogra, Dabaybe, Poncha, or Pocorosa. It is only on perceiving the immense importance of those events which happen in the early days of new-found countries, that we can sufficiently arouse our attention to consider such events at all.

Then, however, we may see that the fate of future empires, and the distribution of races over the face of the earth depend upon the painful deeds of a few adventurers and unrenowned native chieftains—they themselves being like players, whose names and private fortunes we do not care much about, but who are acting in some great drama, the story of which concerns the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

westward as far as the Golfo Dulce. Espinosa himself, acting under the instructions of Pedrarias, founded Panamá in 1516 or 1517; in 1519 it became the seat of government in place of Darien.]

<sup>1</sup> [Among these minor expeditions, that of Antonio Tello de Guzman, who left the city of Darien in November 1515, deserves mention, since he was the first to reach the collection of huts which afterwards became the famous city of Panamá.]

1598  
3 288  
788

## CHAPTER III

### THE FATE OF VASCO NUÑEZ

WHILE narrating the melancholy results of these various expeditions, nothing has been said of Vasco Nuñez, and of the dealings of Pedrarias with one whom he was naturally inclined to look upon as a rival, and to treat as an enemy. Many and severe must have been the comparisons made by the men who had served under Vasco Nuñez, between the successful mode in which he had alternately soothed and terrified the Indian caciques, and the unsuccessful manner in which the captains of Pedrarias had prosecuted their disastrous adventures.<sup>1</sup> For some time it appears that Vasco Nuñez remained an unemployed man, and, as may be seen from his letters to the King, a very discontented and critical observer. He resolved to undertake an expedition of his own, and sent secretly to Cuba for men to accompany him in peopling the coasts of the Southern Sea.

It was, perhaps, at the solicitation of the Bishop of Darien, or it might have been from motives of policy, that the Governor resolved at this period to employ Vasco Nuñez in making an entrance (a favourite phrase of the Spaniards) into the country of Dabaybe, of which Vasco had written great accounts to the court of Spain. If he succeeded in this enterprize, the Governor would share in his success: if he failed, the Governor would gain, at least in credit, by any failure of an undertaking conducted by Vasco Nuñez.<sup>2</sup> And fail he did, for the very same reason alluded to in the notice of a recent expedition; namely, that he encountered the Indians on an element

<sup>1</sup> [Vasco Nuñez is said to have made his own comparisons:—"All the enterprises of Pedrarias met with such ill success that Balboa laughed at him and mocked him"—doubtless retailed to Pedrarias.—(BENZONI, *Hist. Novi Orbis*.)]

<sup>2</sup> [In June 1515.]

in which they were naturally the masters. Attacking him on the water they were completely successful, and Vasco Núñez himself was wounded and escaped with difficulty. The scarcity, also, of provisions prevented him from making any stay in Dabaybe's country, which had recently been stripped by locusts.<sup>1</sup> Vasco Núñez could not induce Dabaybe, whose principal town he had seized upon, to come near him, and he had nothing to do but to return to Darien with confirmed intelligence of the mineral wealth of the country he had traversed, but with no visible signs of treasure. It may be imagined what joy this ill-success must have given to the captains of Pedrarias, and probably to the Governor himself.

It was mentioned some time back that Vasco Núñez, soon after his discovery of the South Sea, had sent a man named Arbolanche to the court of Spain with the good news, and with rich presents.<sup>2</sup> This messenger did not come in time to stop the appointment of Pedrarias, but the tidings which Arbolanche brought were well received; and the King not only pardoned Vasco Núñez, but conferred upon him the title of Adelantado. Hitherto it had been the fashion at the court of Spain to speak very slightly of Vasco Núñez, but this intelligence of the discovery of the South Sea, the greatest that had reached the mother country since Columbus had brought back the tidings and the signs of a new world, must have changed in great measure the opinions of the King and of the court respecting Vasco Núñez. And the good opinion they now entertained of him would be likely to increase rather than to diminish, when men came to reflect upon the nature of his discoveries, and the mode in which he had followed them out.

It was probably about the time that Pedrarias had sent the Bachiller Enciso to Cenú, that the title of Adelantado came out for Vasco Núñez. Joined with this title, the

<sup>1</sup> See his letter to the King.—NAV., *Col.*, iii, p. 381.

<sup>2</sup> [The news reached Spain before Arbolanche. In a letter to Vasco Núñez, of 19th August 1514, Ferdinand tells him that he has heard from Miguel de Pasamonte, the treasurer of Espanola, of the discovery of the South Sea, and that he has written to Pedrarias to treat him (Vasco Núñez) well.]

government of Coyva and Panamá was also granted to him.<sup>1</sup> Coyva is a small island where Vasco Nuñez thought that there were pearls. The King did not omit to endeavour to make Pedrarias and Vasco Nuñez act harmoniously together, recommending the Governor to show all kindness to so useful a servant of the Crown as Vasco Nuñez, and Vasco Nuñez to endeavour to please Pedrarias as much as possible. But, as one of Vasco Nuñez's biographers observes, "that which was easy at court was impossible at Darien, where factions prevented it."

Not long after this time, Andres Garavito, the man whom Vasco Nuñez had sent to Cuba to negotiate for him there, returning to Darien with seventy men and all the necessary provisions for an expedition, came to place himself under the orders of Vasco Nuñez. Garavito, when at six leagues from the port, sent secretly to advise Vasco Nuñez of his arrival; but the intelligence also reaching the ears of Pedrarias, caused the utmost offence to that jealous Governor, who gave orders that Vasco Nuñez should be arrested and put in prison. At the entreaty, however, of the Bishop of Darien, the Governor did not send Vasco Nuñez to prison, but set him free on certain conditions which were arranged between them.

It seems that Vasco Nuñez was now left for some time in neglect, and might have remained so, but for the interposition of the Bishop of Darien, between whom and Vasco Nuñez a strong friendship or alliance had sprung up. I imagine that the Bishop, himself a man of ability, recognized the abilities of Vasco Nuñez. However that may be, the Bishop succeeded in making Vasco Nuñez and the Governor friends; and he proposed to cement this friendship by the strongest family bonds, suggesting that Pedrarias should give his daughter in marriage to Vasco Nuñez. This was, no doubt, a wise step to take; the Governor assented; and the espousals

<sup>1</sup> [The appointment came out in 1515; it is said that Pedrarias attempted to suppress the despatch under cover of the *residencia*, which Vasco Nuñez was still undergoing, but was prevented by the Bishop of Darien. As Adelantado of the South Sea Vasco Nuñez would have for himself the choicest portion of the government of Pedrarias.]

were formally made, the young lady herself being in Spain. It does not appear, however, that either Pedrarias or his intended son-in-law was in a great hurry for the marriage to be solemnized; and it is probable that the attachment of Vasco Nuñez to one of his Indian captives rendered him very indifferent about the marriage, except as a matter of policy.

The rivals being now reconciled, or appearing to be so, were at liberty to push their united fortunes forward with vigour. Pedrarias sent Vasco Nuñez to occupy a town in the port of Acla<sup>1</sup> (founded by Gabriel Rojas, one of Pedrarias's captains, and afterwards abandoned for fear of the neighbouring Indians,) whence he was to prepare to embark upon the South Sea.<sup>2</sup> Acla, however, as may be seen in the map, is on this side of South America. It was therefore, the bold, and, considering the number of lives that were consumed by it, we must say, the cruel scheme, of Vasco Nuñez, to prepare for the construction of his vessels at Acla, and to carry the materials overland to the South Sea. When arrived at Acla, Vasco Nuñez, who always showed himself a true commander, took care to order each of his men, with the assistance of his slaves, to till the ground, that they might be sure of subsistence. He himself set the example of working with his own hands at this prudent employment, as "in all labours he took the foremost part."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acla signifies "the bones of men."—"Acla in the native tongue means bones or remains of men."—*Relacion de PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA*. (Orig. en el Arch. de Ind. en Sevilla, Relac. y Descripc., leg. ii.)—NAV., *Col.*, iii, p. 397.

[Sir Clements Markham places Acla at Caledonia Harbour, or Puerto de los Escoces, the settlement of the ill-fated Darien Company nearly two centuries later. Mr. H. Bancroft places it three or four leagues north of Caledonia Harbour. From the records of the Darien Company there can be no doubt that Sir C. Markham is right. There is something striking to the imagination in the destiny linked with this place, which brought disaster and death to all connected with it, from native Indians to Scotch emigrants.]

<sup>2</sup> [About the middle of 1516, but Mr. H. H. Bancroft (*Hist. of Central America*, i, p. 440) notices that all the dates connected with the last years of Vasco Nuñez are very doubtful.]

<sup>3</sup> "In this he was the foremost because he was a strong man, and at that time about forty years of age; and in all labours he took the leading part."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 231.



Just at that period it happened that Espinosa and his men, with all their riches and their slaves, came to Acla, on their return to Darien. The shrewd Vasco Nuñez foresaw that when these men, accustomed to an adventurous life, had reached Darien, and had divided the spoil, they would soon begin to tire of inactivity. He accordingly followed them to Darien, and contrived to bring back with him to Acla two hundred of them, the Governor favouring the efforts of his intended son-in-law.

Vasco Nuñez and his men now began the terrible labour of their undertaking, which was to cut wood and fashion it at Acla, thence to convey it across the sierras to the river Valsa, there to construct four brigantines, and thence to launch them on the South Sea, to pursue a grand career abounding in riches and discovery.

One of the first things to be done, was to make a station on the top of the sierras, where those might rest who had to bring up the burden of the building materials,—wood, iron, and cordage. For this purpose Vasco Nuñez sent a man called Compañon with some Spaniards and thirty negroes. How these thirty negroes came to be under the orders of Vasco Nuñez, is rather surprizing. I suppose they must have been imported from Hispaniola. If so, it shows that there was a greater number of negroes there at that time than has ever been imagined. But it is just possible that these negroes were taken from that tribe which was found so unaccountably in this very region of South America, close to Quarequa's country.

When the station had been made on the top of the sierra, Vasco Nuñez caused the wood to be carried up there immediately. From Acla to this station it was twelve leagues of terrible road, over mountains and rivers, which latter, being of the nature of mountain torrents, were at one time shallows, at another floods. In encountering this stupendous labour, five hundred Indians perished. This fact appears in a statement which Vasco Nuñez's friend, the Bishop of Darien, made afterwards at the court of Spain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "That Vasco Nuñez caused the death of five hundred Indians in building his brigantines I saw in a report signed with the name of

As the Indians died, Vasco Núñez sent companies to impress other Indians for the terrible labour. It may be noticed that no single Spaniard or negro is said to have perished of this work, in which the Indians died by hundreds.

After all the wood had been transported in this painful manner to the river Valsa, Vasco Núñez divided his company into three parties: one to cut the wood; the second, to bring from Acla the iron-work and cordage for the ships; the third, to get provisions in the neighbouring country, and to capture Indians. The enterprize was now interrupted by a most unexpected misfortune, which if discovered earlier, might have saved the lives of many of those wretched Indians who had perished in bringing the wood over the mountains. This wood, when it was already formed and fashioned, and some of it probably on the stocks, turned out to be eaten through and through with worms. Another time also, when the Spaniards were far advanced in their work, and were in the midst of it, there came suddenly upon them a very high tide, which swept away part of the wood, buried the rest in the mud and slime, drove terrified workmen up into the trees for safety. Vasco Núñez was not a little discouraged by these mishaps. To add to his troubles, the third division of his men had been unsuccessful in obtaining food, so that the whole community suffered extremely from hunger, and Vasco Núñez himself was obliged to live upon such roots of the earth as he could get. "It may be imagined," says Las Casas, "what the five or six hundred Indians in attendance had to eat."

The Adelantado, however, did not give up the undertaking, but returned to Acla, whence he sent to the Governor, who furnished him with fresh men and supplies of provisions. With these he returned to the river, and, after incredible labour, contrived to build two brigantines. No sooner were these vessels finished, than he put to sea at once in them, and made for the Island of Pearls, leaving a part of his company to the said Bishop made to the Emperor at Barcelona in 1519."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lrv, p. 233.

complete the other two brigantines, which he needed. Thence he proceeded down the coast as far as the Puerto de Piñas. The natives of those parts, who had suffered from the cruelties of Morales, came out to battle with Vasco Nuñez; but he soon put them to rout, and despoiled them. From thence he returned to the Island of Pearls, to cut wood for the two other brigantines. He was also in want of iron and pitch, for which commodities he resolved to send to Acla.

It happened that about this time a report had reached that town, that Pedrarias was to be superseded, and Lope de Sosa appointed Governor of the Tierra-firme. This, which, some time ago, would have been the most joyous news for Vasco Nuñez, was now most unwelcome, his fortunes and those of his future father-in-law being bound up together. Talking one evening with two friends, one named Valderrabano,<sup>1</sup> and the other a clerigo, by name Rodrigo Perez, about the news of Lope de Sosa's coming, Vasco Nuñez observed, "It seems probable that he is either come, or that there is news of his approaching arrival; and if he is come, Pedrarias, my lord, is no longer Governor, and we are defrauded of our hopes, and such labours as we have undergone are lost. It seems to me, therefore, that to get some information about that which we desire to know, Francis Garavito had better go to Acla to ask for the iron and pitch which we want, and to learn if the new Governor is come; and if he is, to return, and we will finish our ships as best we can, and pursue our enterprize; and, whatever may happen to us, it is probable that, whoever may be Governor, will receive us well, in order that we may assist and serve him. But if Pedrarias, my lord, should still be in power, then Garavito should let him know in what state we are, and he will provide what we want, and then we shall set off on our voyage, of which I hope in God, the success for us will be such as we so much desire."

The counsel was adopted; and we learn, from a soldier in the expedition, in what way the plan was to

<sup>1</sup> The notary who drew up the account of the discovery of the South Sea before quoted.

be carried out. It was arranged that when the party under Francis Garavito came near to Acla, they were to halt, and one of them, named Luis Botello, was to enter the town by night, and learn, at the house of Vasco Nuñez, if there were any news of the appointment of another governor. If there were, he would be able to communicate the intelligence to his friends, and they might return without entering the town.<sup>1</sup>

The conversation which preceded this resolve, and which has been reported above, was very innocent, that is, if it had been reported fully. At the worst it did not contain anything which Pedrarias could have complained of. It happened, however, that, as Vasco Nuñez was talking, it began to rain, and that the sentinel whose duty it was to keep guard at his quarters (*la guarda-persona*) took shelter under the eaves of the hut where Vasco and his friends were sitting; and this sentinel heard just so much of the conversation as would convey to him the idea that Vasco Nuñez proposed to his companions to go away with the ships, and make the expedition on their own account. This way of concluding, from a small portion of what is heard or understood, forms, no doubt, a daily cause of the largest misrepresentations and mistakes. The sentinel keeps to himself, for the present, what he has heard, and what he thinks he understands.

Meanwhile, Pedrarias had heard from Andres Garavito that Vasco Nuñez intended to free himself from allegiance to his superior in command. It will astonish the reader that such intelligence should come from this quarter, as Andres Garavito has hitherto appeared as the chosen friend of Vasco Nuñez. But it seems probable that Andres courted the Indian woman, daughter of Careta, who was much beloved by Vasco Nuñez; and at any rate that

<sup>1</sup> "It was arranged that he should send a man to the neighbourhood of Acla, who should enter by night and go to the house of Vasco Nuñez, and find out if there was any news of the new governor. If it was true every one was to return that the new governor might not break up the expedition, and we were to have gone to settle at Chepabar, which is six leagues nearer Acla than is Panamá."—*Relacion de PASCUAL DE ANDAGOYA*.—NAVARRETE, *Col. de Viages*, iii, p. 305. [This *Relacion* has been translated and edited for the Hakluyt Society by Sir Clements Markham.]

high words had passed between the friends with respect to this beautiful Indian.<sup>1</sup> It is stated that, upon the Governor's receiving this traitorous information from Andres Garavito (or perhaps upon the capture of Luis Botello who, coming into Acla by night, was seized as a spy and sent to Darien), the suspicious and irritable old man went to Acla, and found there Francis Garavito, who, in accordance with the intentions of Vasco Nuñez (expressed that wet evening to his friends), had been sent to Acla to get what was wanted for the ships, and to make out the news from Spain. He succeeded in soothing the Governor's suspicions, but, unluckily for Vasco Nuñez, an enemy of his, Alonso de la Puente, obtained intelligence, either from the sentinel, or perhaps from some one who had accompanied Francis Garavito, of what the sentinel thought he had heard.<sup>2</sup> Alonso de la Puente carried this news to Pedrarias, and the rage and suspicions of the Governor, which had often been soothed or suppressed, now burst out with uncontrollable vehemence.

It must be allowed that Pedrarias had good reasons, or rather reasonable motives, for disliking and suspecting Vasco Nuñez. The incompetent, when in power, dislike the competent who are looking on, hating them for all the comments they imagine them to be making. And in this case there was no imagination in the question, for, in a letter from Vasco Nuñez to the King, which bears date the 16th of October 1515, there are the strongest expressions of blame respecting the conduct of the government and the character of the Governor. Vasco Nuñez, with all the bitterness of a man who sees the results of his best labours sullied and despoiled, tells the King of the atrocities committed by the captains of Pedrarias; of their turning friendly Indians into watchful enemies, ravaging the country, branding slaves in the most reck-

<sup>1</sup> "They say that Garavito wrote this lie—or perhaps truth—to Pedrarias because Vasco Nuñez," etc.—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> OVIEDO does not mention this story; and his account of the causes of Vasco Nuñez's ruin is throughout slightly different from the above, but without substantially altering the relation between the parties, or affecting the justice of the case.—See *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 12.

less manner, and desolating the land to such an extent, that, as he justly prophesies, hereafter it will not be possible to find a remedy for it. He speaks of the confusion in the government, of the want of concert and unity of purpose, of the neglect of the King's *hacienda*. He then proceeds to give his opinion of the Governor's character,—“He is a man in whom reign all the envy and covetousness in the world; he is wretched when he sees that there is friendship between any persons of worth; it delights him to hear fables and chatter from one and the other; he is a man who very lightly gives credit to evil counsels rather than to those of good; he is a person without any discretion and without any dexterity or talent for the affairs of government.”<sup>1</sup> And in this strain Vasco Núñez goes on, summing up the Governor's character in a manner which, though probably very consistent with truth,<sup>2</sup> would not fail to keep up in full force the deadly enmity between them, when it was re-conveyed, as it very likely was, from some person at the court of Spain to the Governor of Darien.

Pedrarias, now fully bent upon revenge for all his real and fancied wrongs, still masters his fury sufficiently to write a crafty letter to Vasco Núñez, begging him to come to him at Acla, that they may confer together upon business. Meanwhile, Vasco Núñez was quietly and serenely awaiting the return of his messenger, Francis Garavito. Whatever that answer might be, Vasco Núñez might well feel assured of fortune. If his father-in-law was still in power, he might be joined by new adventurers, and be sure of fresh supplies; if Lope de Sosa had come, he would sail away with his trustful company, free from any superior, and confident in his future fortunes, the light of his unique renown throwing forwards a brilliant track in the future, along which he would sail to still bolder adventures, and still greater discoveries. And such, indeed, would have been the probable result, had he once more spread his sails upon the waters which owned him for their great discoverer. In that case the conquest of Peru

<sup>1</sup> NAV., *Col.*, iii, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> The reader will recollect the character of the Governor given by the Bishop, in which he speaks of his inconstancy.

would not have troubled us much with the name, or the deeds, of the ignorant Pizarro, but would have been made by one fitted to govern and to re-construct, as well as to conquer. It was a career which, in the opinions of the men of that age, the stars were certain to have much concern with; and, accordingly, we learn that a Venetian astrologer and natural philosopher, called Micer Codro, who had come to those parts to see the world, had told Vasco Nuñez, that the year in which he should see a certain "star," which the astrologer pointed out, in such a place of the heavens, he would run great risk of his life, but if he escaped that danger, he would be the greatest and richest lord in all the Indies.

Walking one evening—an evening in the tropics where Nature is so large and so gracious—probably along the sea-shore from whence he could see his brigantines lying idly in the harbour, Vasco Nuñez looked up and beheld his fateful star in the quarter of the heavens which the astrologer had pointed out to him. In the merry mood of a man who is near his doom, what the Scotch call "fey," he turned to his attendants, and began to mock at the prophecy. "A sensible man, indeed, would he be, who should believe in diviners, especially in Micer Codro, who told me this and this (here he related the Italian's words of omen), and behold I see the star he spoke of, when I find myself with four ships and three hundred men on the Sea of the South, just about to navigate it." Though Vasco Nuñez did thus despise the prophecy, it was a very judicious one (there is no little wisdom sometimes in the words of charlatans, a wisdom built upon great knowledge of life), for men's fortunes come to a focus, or rather, to a point in the intersection of many curves of other lives and circumstances; and what is done by them then has life and warmth in it, and can be done then only. It was easy to perceive, even for a person less versed in the foibles and wild wishes of mankind than an astrologer would be, that Vasco Nuñez was rapidly nearing some such crisis in his stormy life.

When Vasco Nuñez was uttering these confident words, and continuing, it is said, in the same boastful strain, he

was little aware that the sleepless furies were even then close behind him. Dramatically, at that moment, really, a few days afterwards, a messenger from Pedrarias brought his treacherous letter to Vasco Nuñez, who was then in the little island called the Island of Tortoises. It has been remarked by Las Casas as singular that no one sent a warning word to Vasco Nuñez, not even his own messenger at Acla; but this may be accounted for by the dissimulation of the Governor, who, perhaps, confided to no one his real intent. Vasco Nuñez went with the utmost readiness to meet his father-in-law at Acla. On the road he fell in with Pizarro, who had come with soldiers to arrest him. "What is this, Francisco Pizarro?" he exclaimed, "you were not wont to come out in this fashion to receive me." But he attempted neither flight nor resistance, and being thus taken, he was put into confinement in the house of a man called Casteneda, while the Licentiate Espinosa was ordered to proceed against him with all possible rigour. At first, Pedrarias pretended that he did this only to give Vasco Nuñez an opportunity for justifying himself; but afterwards, he showed his true wishes, and broke out into violent reproaches against his son-in-law, who protested that he was innocent of the meditated offence laid to his charge, asking why should he have come to Acla to meet Pedrarias, if he had not been conscious of his innocence. It was not difficult to frame a good indictment against Vasco Nuñez, introducing the imprisonment of Enciso, the death of Nicuesa, and the reported conversation of Vasco Nuñez with his friends, partially overheard by the sentinel, which must have been the main ground of the charge. There was also a letter from a friend in Darien which counselled flight;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This friend's name was Argüello, and the subject of his letter indicates another cause of ill-feeling between the Governor and Vasco Nuñez. It appears that a certain time had been appointed for Vasco Nuñez to commence his undertaking—a year and a half—that he had exceeded that time, and sought for the enlargement of the period; that his enemies at the Governor's court prevented a favourable answer being at once given to this reasonable request; and that Argüello being at Darien and cognizant of all these circumstances, wrote to Vasco Nuñez, advising him to take his departure. "Of all this



and I conjecture that imprudent sayings by Vasco Nuñez in former times were now remembered, if not formally brought up against him. The Governor was not the only enemy of Vasco Nuñez; but the Treasurer Alonso de la Puente, for some dispute about money, and Andres Garavito, for the love affair before mentioned (the two great moving mischiefs of the world being thus arrayed against Vasco Nuñez), were his enemies.<sup>1</sup> The soft hand of some fair woman not seldom interweaves the fatal thread of that coil in their affairs which strangles out the lives of the greatest men.

It is but just, however, to mention, that there is an account of the last days of Vasco Nuñez, entitled to considerable credit, which takes away a great deal of the baseness laid to the charge of Andres Garavito. And, as the minor characters in history require to be considerably dealt with as well as those of the more notable men, I think it right to give this friend of Vasco Nuñez the benefit of Oviedo's testimony. That writer, who afterwards came into possession of some of Vasco Nuñez's papers, says that Andres Garavito was placed in arrest, and turned King's evidence, in order to save his own life.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may be the exact truth, which would reconcile or displace these somewhat conflicting statements, the main facts remain tolerably clear, and present much the same appearance in modern times as they did at that time in the court of Spain, where Peter Martyr thus summed up, in his rapid fashion, what he had heard of the matter. "Pedrarias summons Vasco Nuñez from

Fernando de Argüello informed him in a letter which cost him his head, in which he wrote him that they were not willing to give him a longer time, and that he would advise him not to rely on it nor delay his departure."—OVEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 12.

<sup>1</sup> There is a confusion in this story as given by Herrera, which is to be accounted for, as I conjecture, by there being two brothers of the name of Garavito; one Francis who was true to Nuñez, the other Andres who was not so.

<sup>2</sup> "Garavito being thus taken was advised to confess all he knew of the business, and beg mercy and the gift of his life; this he did, confessed to the Governor and swore as aforesaid. For this confession he was pardoned his crime and part in the said conspiracy."—OVEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 12.

the South : Vasco obeys the command, and is put in chains. Vasco denies the treason imputed to him. Witnesses are sought for to prove the crimes which he has committed : his words from the beginning are collected" (this is the point at which a friend's hostility would be so fatal), "his offence is judged to be worthy of death, he is destroyed."<sup>1</sup>

It seems hard that Vasco Nuñez should be condemned for an offence of which he was, comparatively speaking, innocent. But this is the way in which, both in small and great matters, we are all punished, namely, for those things which we did not commit ; and this is quite reasonable, considering how many of our worst actions do not find their fitting retribution just yet. The Licentiate Espinosa, in giving a report to Pedrarias of the result of the process, said that Vasco Nuñez had incurred the penalty of death, but taking into consideration the eminent services which he had rendered to the state, the Licentiate recommended that his life should be spared. Pedrarias, however, was implacable. "Since he has sinned, let him die for it" (*Pues se pecó, muera por ello*), was the exclamation of the fiery old man ; and he ordered the sentence to be instantly carried into effect, which was that they should cut off Vasco Nuñez's head, the crier going before him and saying with a loud voice "This is the justice which our lord the King, and Pedrarias, his Lieutenant, in his name, command to be done upon this man as a traitor and usurper of the lands subject to the royal crown." It was in vain that Vasco Nuñez protested against the sentence. He was beheaded, and after him four of his friends,<sup>2</sup> who were implicated in the so-

<sup>1</sup> PETER MARTYR, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. 4, cap. 9.

<sup>2</sup> [Andrés de Valderrabáno (he who was present at, and drew up the account of, the ceremony of taking possession of the South Sea), Luis Botello, Fernando Muñoz, and Fernando de Argüello. It can only be said that the year was 1517.]

Argüello, the friend who had written from Darien to Vasco Nuñez, was the last who came to the place of execution ; and daylight was beginning to fade. The whole of the Spanish population of Acla began to implore the Governor to spare Argüello, as it seemed that God, by sending the night, was preventing that death. But Pedrarias furiously replied, that rather than that man should live, he would prefer that

called conspiracy, amongst whom was the lay friend Valderrabano, to whom he confided his intentions on that wet evening which proved so fatal to him. The Clerigo, probably on account of his profession, escaped a like fate.

Thus perished Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, in the forty-second year of his age, the man who, since the time of Columbus, had shown the most statesmanlike and warrior-like powers<sup>1</sup> in that part of the world, but whose career only too much resembles that of Ojeda, Nicuesa, and the other unfortunate commanders who devastated those beautiful regions of the earth. Like the career of most even of the greatest men, it puts one in mind of the half-hewn stones which are still found in quarries, stones that were just about to be taken to some signal place in some great old temple, when from a convulsion on the face of the earth, or in the kingdoms of it, the work seems to have been broken off, and the workmen came to that quarry no more.

With his death, we may, for the present, take leave of the proceedings in the *Tierra-firme*: I wish I could have dealt with them in the way that Peter Martyr does, in his work "on the islands lately discovered," where he says, speaking of the doings of Pedrarias, "I will give them in few words, because they were all horrid transactions, nothing pleasant in any of them."

The foregoing account, however, is eminently instructive as regards the dealings of the Spaniards with the upon himself the sentence should be executed. And so light enough was found for Argüello's execution.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to his other qualities for a commander, Vasco Nuñez was celebrated for humanity towards his men, being personally attentive to any who were ill, when engaged in active service. Oviedo says, and he was no friend to Vasco Nuñez, that of all the commanders he had seen in the Indies, Vasco Nuñez was the best in this respect.— "On active service if a man became worn out with fatigue or ill during any enterprize he would not desert him, but, if necessary, went forward himself with a cross-bow to do his best to obtain a bird of some kind, and dress it, and looked after him as if he had been a son or brother of his own, cheering and encouraging him. All of which no captain of the many who, to the present day of 1548, have come to the Indies has done in his expeditions better, or as well, as Vasco Nuñez."— OVIEDO, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 29, cap. 2.

Indians; though it is with difficulty that any readable narrative can be made of such a thicket of facts and names and dates, so perplexed and yet disjointed. The utmost I can hope is, that the persons who were involved in this story might, perhaps, were they to read it now, recognize themselves in it. This is not putting the truth of the narrative very high. It is probable, however, that there are many accounts of things in which the persons engaged, except for the similarity of the names to their own, would not recognize themselves, and would imagine they were reading fiction. The dialogues of the Dead upon History would, I suspect, often make the ears of the living narrator tingle.

In considering the long tissue of mis-directed efforts narrated in this and the preceding chapters, it is natural to employ our minds in conjecturing what would have been the best course to have been pursued by men in power at that period. That many of them earnestly desired to do right, is manifest, and it seems hard perpetually to criticize their doings without suggesting what they ought to have done. Had they been contented with a reasonable gain in trade, there is but little doubt in my mind that they would have prospered greatly. We see, I think, that the expeditions which were thus conducted, were almost the only successful ones. This would not have prevented the gradual settlement of Spaniards in America, but would only have made it proceed in the most natural, and therefore, successful manner. Mercantile forts would have been erected: these would have depended for their supply, not wholly on the surrounding country, but on their fellow-countrymen; and by degrees that knowledge of the ways, customs, and especially of the language, of the Indians, would have been learnt, which would have proved most serviceable in further communication with them, and in forming more extended settlements of the Spaniards. If, on the other hand, settlements were to be made without reference to trade, it is clear that agriculture should have been the first and the principal object of each new settlement. Trade and agriculture: these are the two chief sources

of well-being for an infant colony. No colony is supported for any long time upon conquest; unless, indeed the conquerors at once adopt the ways and means of procuring livelihood in use among the subject people.

It would also have been possible, perhaps, for a more extended colonization to have taken place with good effect, under a strict and limited government, such as might have been provided if, for instance, one of the young princes of the house of Spain, Ferdinand, Charles the Fifth's brother, had been sent out to administer the Indies, and afterwards to possess what he should there acquire. For the want of unity in government, the distance from the centre of power, and the consequent strength and temerity of faction, were some of the main causes of the deplorable failures which have just been described.

This, however, is all *ex post facto* wisdom. The recklessness of the conquerors, their love of wild adventure, the attractive power of gold which uses men for its divining-rods, drawing them hither and thither through the utmost dangers to the most wretched parts of the earth, as it lists—all these together prevented, and must have prevented, anything like patient, steady, forbearing, concentrated colonization.

Throughout the history of the peopling of the *Tierra-firme* by the Spaniards, it is impossible not to feel the greatest pity for the Indians, who seem, from the first, like a devoted people given over to destruction, who learn no new thing but despair from the presence of their invaders, who might, however, have brought to them and taught them so much that was good. For the Spaniards, too, seeing their undaunted energy and immense endurance,<sup>1</sup> it is impossible not to have some pity. They may be conquerors, but they seem, after all, more like demon-driven captives. Little, apparently, is gained for humanity by all they do; and the majority of them, after filling up their measure of destruction, die miserably and contemptibly, with the hard eyes upon them of

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to observe, that they make little or no mention, for the most part, of those minor miseries which we know they must have suffered so much from.

suffering companions, suffering too much themselves to have any pity left for others.

Of the eminent men among the Conquerors who came to a miserable end, long lists have been formed, in which the names of Nicuesa, Ojeda, and Vasco Núñez are sure to be found. But still the ranks closed up again; and there were always men ready to take the places of those commanders who had vanished from the scene. Indeed, there is nothing in the fate of these men very different from that of other adventurous people. Most men are hastening to meet some great disaster. With most men the object they pursue, which is ever present to their imaginations as something radiant in white robes and most beautiful, is attended by a companion clad in very different guise, wholly invisible to the pursuer; and but too often when he comes close to that which he has so long desired and so long pursued, and is just at the summit of his wishes, the other—the dark thing—steps forward to receive him. And it is this that he has all along been struggling up to. What, however, is peculiar about these Spanish Conquerors is not so much their own fate as the miserable nature of their objects, the deplorable idea they had of success, and the villainous path over which they hurried to their doom—each Spaniard leaving a long track of desolation behind him, and being attended to the shades by hosts of slaughtered Indians.

The reader of these things feels, as the Indians sometimes felt themselves, that great prophecies of old were being unrelentingly fulfilled against them.

I am reminded of an old proverb of awful import which, in these wars and devastations, applies to the conquerors as to the conquered, and which says, "God may consent, but not for ever" (*Dios consiente, pero no para siempre*), indicating that there is an end, however remote, to all that is not built up in consonance with His laws.

## BOOK VII

### CUBA

#### CHAPTER I

CUBA DISCOVERED BY COLUMBUS—COLONIZED UNDER VELAZQUEZ  
—FATE OF THE CACIQUE HATUEY—EXPEDITION OF NARVAEZ  
AND LAS CASAS—MASSACRE OF CAONAO AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—TOWNS FOUNDED IN CUBA BY VELAZQUEZ

THE next difficulty, after discovering and adopting a general rule, is to know when to break through it. It is from not mastering this difficulty, that three of the principal historians who have written on the subject of the Spanish conquests, have, as I venture to think, fallen into considerable error, and made books which none but those who have a love for history will read. Peter Martyr, Las Casas, and Herrera endeavoured in their histories to maintain chronological order—a very desirable thing, no doubt, as a general rule, but absolutely incompatible with a clear understanding of the various complicated and place-shifting events which these historians had to chronicle.

If a single drama may be bound down by the Unities, the course of history certainly will not allow itself to be restricted by any such nice rules; and the attempt to make it exact and undeviating in one respect often lets in a flood of confusion in others. The historian, it is true, may be unimpeachable as regards the unbroken sequence of his dates; but this is no gain if the reader's apprehension is to be entirely confused by a narrative which requires his imagination to fly from place to place, or to be nearly ubiquitous, and his memory to retain before it at the same moment several independent trains of fact and reasoning.

I make the foregoing remarks to explain why, though

in general striving to maintain the order of time, I have nevertheless related, without any break, the principal circumstances connected with the first occupation of the *Tierra-firme*.

The reader may now, to a certain extent, dismiss that course of events from his mind, remembering the main outlines of the story: namely, that the northern coast of South America has been investigated and traversed; the great South Sea discovered; the neighbouring Indians subjugated, enslaved, or driven away from the coast; two or three cities founded; and a very large proportion of the Spaniards destroyed by disease, famine, hardship, and the assaults of the natives.

The occupation of Cuba by the Spaniards is the next great stepping-stone in this history. It was from Cuba that two or three of the most important expeditions, such as that of Francisco de Córdova to Yucatan, of Juan Grijalva to Panuco, and of Cortes to Mexico, were directed. It was at Cuba that Las Casas commenced his career of humanity; and the settlement of the Spaniards in that island affords a memorable example of their general policy and conduct towards the Indians.

Cuba was discovered by Columbus in the course of his first voyage;<sup>1</sup> but it seems not to have been much regarded by the Spaniards for some years. They were doubtful, indeed, whether it was an island, until King Ferdinand directed Ovando to investigate the fact, when he despatched a certain commander, named Ocampo, to coast about Cuba, who ascertained that it was an island.<sup>2</sup>

The disposition of the inhabitants was similar to that of the Indians in Hispaniola: and hitherto those Spaniards who had been thrown upon the coast of Cuba, had for the most part experienced nothing but kind treatment from the natives. One of the caciques was called Comendador, having been baptized by some Spaniards, and having

<sup>1</sup> [In 1492; and was at first named Juana in honour of Don Juan, heir to the Spanish throne. The name Cuba seems to have come from a town heard of by Columbus, and supposed to have been so pronounced. In 1515 the island was ordered to be called Fernandina, after Ferdinand.]

<sup>2</sup> [In 1508.]



chosen this name from the title of Ovando, the Governor of Hispaniola, who was a Comendador of the order of Alcántara.

It chanced that a Spanish vessel, passing by that part of the coast which is near to the Cape de la Cruz, left there a young mariner who was ill, but who afterwards recovered. This mariner placed an image of the Virgin Mary in one of the houses of the Cacique Comendador, and taught the people to come there every evening, and on their knees to say the *Ave Maria* and the *Salve Regina*. The neighbouring caciques were very angry because this Cacique and his people had deserted the idol they had all been accustomed to worship, and which was called, in the language of that country, their Cemi. Many battles took place about the matter in dispute, but the victory was ever with the Christian Cacique. The others said that neither Comendador, nor his men, gained the battles, but a beautiful woman clad in white, with a wand in her hand. Both parties at last came to an agreement to try the relative merits of the Cemi and of the Virgin Mary in this fashion; namely, that the infidel caciques should take an Indian of Comendador's party, and should bind him as they pleased, and that Comendador should take an Indian from their party and bind him as he pleased; and that the two should be left alone, by night, in a field. Then, if the Cemi was more powerful than the Virgin Mary, he would come and set free his worshipper; but, if the Virgin Mary was more powerful than the Cemi, she would come and unbind her worshipper. Guards were appointed to see what should happen. The men being bound and left, as agreed upon, at midnight came the Cemi to unbind his man, and while he was unbinding him, the Virgin Mary, clothed entirely in white, and very beautiful, with a wand in her hand, appeared, upon which the Cemi fled. But she touched her worshipper with the wand, and, as she touched him, he was loosed, and all his bonds went upon the other Indian, in addition to those which he had before. The caciques said that it was some deceit, and they resolved to try the thing again, and see whether it were true or not. Again the witnesses

told the same story. The caciques themselves resolved to watch; and as they too saw the miracle, they said that the Virgin Mary was a good Cacique, and that Comendador might take the Virgin Mary for his lord, and that the others might choose which they pleased, the Virgin Mary or the Cemi. Afterwards there came a clerigo that way and baptized many of these Indians; he also endeavoured to teach them, at the risk of his life, not to put food for the Virgin Mary as they were accustomed to do for their Cemi. Every Christian that came in their way, they made sit down, and gave him to eat, and insisted upon his saying his *Ave Maria*, whether he liked it or not, for they were very zealous, as converts are apt to be; "And they took me too," says Enciso, "and I said it many times, and I remained with them three days."<sup>1</sup> I give this account, not as vouching for its historical fidelity, but to show how little wedded to their own superstitions were these Indians of Cuba, and how willing to adopt anything that came recommended to them by those whom they deemed to be of superior intelligence.

It was in the year 1511 that the Admiral Don Diego Columbus, Governor of Hispaniola, undertook the subjection of Cuba. He chose for his Captain Diego Velazquez, one of the original conquerors, a man of wealth, whose possessions in Hispaniola were in that part of the island nearest to Cuba. Velazquez was a person of imposing presence and demeanour, who, as Herrera intimates, required to have all the honour paid to him that was due to his station, but was of a kindly nature and very forgiving. This will seem an astonishing description, when we come to read of his deeds; but it requires almost the genius of goodness for a man to go far beyond the goodness of his fellows, in fact to be so good as to lose all chance of popular esteem, which, naturally, is reserved for the people's idea of goodness, not for such as may transcend it.

The principal man in Cuba was Hatuey, the Cacique,

<sup>1</sup> ENCISO, *Suma de Geographia, Indias Occidentales*.

mentioned before, who kept spies at Hispaniola to tell him of the transactions of the Spaniards; and who had assembled his people to inform them of the God worshipped by the Spaniards, on which occasion he produced a basket of gold, and made his Indians dance round it and honour it.<sup>1</sup>

Diego Velazquez sailed for Cuba at the end of the year 1511, and disembarked at Puerto de Palmas, in the territory of the Cacique Hatuey. The Cacique endeavoured to defend his country against the inroad of the Spaniards; but could offer only a feeble resistance, as the naked bodies and barbarous weapons of his men were no match whatever for the well-armed, well accoutred Spaniards. Indeed, the only safety for the Indians was in flight; and the nature of the country (for that part of Cuba is very mountainous) afforded them some present means of escape from their enemies. The Spaniards then commenced their Indian hunts, in the course of which they put to death as many men, women, and children as they pleased. The rest they tied together and drove before them like cattle, giving them the same name (*piezas*) as cattle. The Indians thus acquired were not called slaves, though they were so in reality; and Velazquez distributed them, now to one follower, now to another, as it seemed best to him. The only restriction was, that these Indians were not to be bartered,—a restriction which was easily eluded.

Great efforts were made by the Spaniards to secure the person of Hatuey. The captive Indians were in some instances tortured, in order to elicit from them where their Chief was hidden; and at last Hatuey fell into the hands of the Spaniards. His fate was a terrible one. He was sentenced to be burnt alive; and this sentence was literally carried into effect. At the stake the attendant priest exhorted him to be baptized and to become a Christian, as he would then go to Heaven. The Cacique asked in reply, if the Christians went to Heaven, and finding that some of them were expected to do so, he said that he had no wish to go to that place. More

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 140.

sarcasm has been supposed to belong to this answer than it really contains: it was probably no more than the simple expression of a wish, not to meet his enemies and persecutors in a future life, whatever regions of bliss they might be enjoying.

It was shortly after the burning of Hatuey that Las Casas was sent for by Diego Velazquez from the island of Hispaniola. He arrived at Cuba at the same time as Pamphilo de Narvaez (a name which has already been mentioned in this history and which will often occur in it), who was sent from Jamaica with thirty archers to assist in the population and pacification—for such were the terms in vogue—of the island of Cuba. Velazquez appointed Pamphilo de Narvaez his lieutenant; and Las Casas was joined with Narvaez in the office of bringing under submission all the rest of the island. One of the first expeditions of Narvaez was unsuccessful: it was in the province of Bayamo. And he himself was nearly killed, and would never have escaped, but for the terror which his horse, an animal not hitherto seen by these Indians, inspired. Both these Indians, however, and those of Hatuey's country, who had fled at the approach of the Spaniards, returned to beg pardon, and to be received into subjection. This appears astonishing, but may be easily explained. The territories into which they fled were occupied by other Indians, who had food enough for themselves only; and, thereafter, after a brief sojourn, the unhappy fugitives, becoming most unwelcome guests, were tempted to return to their own country; for the Spaniards, though terrible visitors in other respects, did not at once create a famine in those which they occupied, by reason of the comparative smallness of their numbers.

By these means the province where the Spaniards first landed, called Maici, and the adjacent one of Bayamo, were brought into complete subjection; and the inhabitants were then divided into *repartimientos*, and apportioned by Velazquez amongst his followers.<sup>1</sup> After this Velazquez,

<sup>1</sup> [By a Cédula of 8th May 1513. He was, in making the distribution, to have regard firstly for officials, then, in order, for the first conquerors and settlers, for those who held warrants from the crown,

who was about to be married, went to receive his bride, leaving his nephew, Juan de Grijalva, as his lieutenant (for Narvaez had not yet returned), and Las Casas as an adviser to the lieutenant. On the return of Narvaez, orders from Velazquez reached the place where Narvaez and Las Casas were stationed, directing them to make an expedition into the country of Camaguey for the purpose of "assuring" it, to use their phrase.<sup>1</sup> The narrative of this expedition which is given in full detail by Las Casas, an eye-witness and a principal actor in the scene he relates, is very instructive.

Before they reached the province of Camaguey, they came to a place called Cueyba. This was the very spot where Ojeda, when shipwrecked, had left an image of the Virgin. Ojeda, as may be remembered, had been received with great kindness by the Indians in that vicinity, and the image which he left was now held in the highest reverence by the natives, who had built a church, adorning it inside with ornamental work made of cotton, and had set up an altar for the image. Moreover, they had composed couplets in honour of the Virgin, which they sang to sweet melodies, and accompanied with dancing. This image was also held in especial reverence by the Spaniards, and Las Casas being anxious on that account to obtain it in exchange for another image which he had brought with him, entered into treaty with the Cacique for that purpose. The Indian Chief, however, was so alarmed at these overtures, that he fled by night, taking the beloved image with him. Las Casas, when he heard of this, was greatly disconcerted, fearing lest the neighbouring population should take up arms on behalf of their image. He managed, however, to quiet them, assuring them, that he would not only let them keep their own image, but that he would bestow upon them the one which he had brought with him.

and for those who on general grounds appeared to merit a *repartimiento*, "and who will teach the Indians our Holy Catholic Faith."—*Col. de Doc. Ined. relativos al . . . Antiguas Posesiones Españolas*, vi, p. 41.]

<sup>1</sup> [In 1513 or 1514.]

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Such gentle means as these were invariably pursued by Las Casas with the greatest effect; and it is evident from this story how very easy the conversion of the Indians would have been by mild means, which conversion was made the pretext with some, and the real justification with others, for the greatest inhumanities.

The commands of Las Casas met with such reverence from these simple people, that when he sent by a messenger any bit of paper inserted at the end of a stick, the messenger declaring that the paper bore such and such orders, they were implicitly obeyed. The Indians had in general the greatest respect and wonder for the communication among the Spaniards by letter, for it appeared to the Indians quite a miracle, how the information of what had been done in one place was made known in another by means of these mysterious pieces of paper.

One of the chief cares of the Clerigo (the title by which Las Casas describes himself) was, whenever they halted in any Indian town or village, to assign separate quarters to the Indians and the Spaniards. By this means he prevented many disorders and much cruelty. But his principal business was to assemble the children in order to baptize them;<sup>1</sup> and, as he observes, there were many that God bestowed his sacred baptism upon in good time; for none, or nearly none, of all those children remained alive a few months afterwards.

In the course of this journey of pacification, the Spaniards approached a large town of the Indians called Caonao, where an immense number of the natives had congregated together, chiefly to see the horses which the Spaniards brought with them. In the morning of the day on which the Spaniards under Narvaez and Las Casas, amounting to about a hundred men, arrived at Caonao, they stopped

<sup>1</sup> "Immediately on arrival at a village the Clerigo Casas collected all the young children, and aided by two or three Spaniards with some Indians from Española versed in the languages and educated by himself, who he carried with him, baptised all the children he could find in that village. This he did all over the island wherever he came, and many were those that God elected to His sacred Baptism because predestined to His glory and chosen at the fitting time, because few or none of these children remained alive within a few months, as will afterwards be related."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 20.

to breakfast in the dry bed of a stream where there were many stones suitable for grindstones; and they all took the opportunity of sharpening their swords. From thence a wide and arid plain led them to Caonao. They would have suffered terribly from thirst, but that some kindly Indians brought them water on the road. At last they reached Caonao at the time of vespers. Here they halted. The chief population of this Indian town and the vicinity was assembled together in one spot, sitting on the ground and gazing, no doubt with wonderment, at the horses which they had come to see. Apart, in a large hut, were five hundred of the natives, who, being more timid than the others, were content to prepare victuals for the Spaniards, but declined any nearer approaches. The Spaniards had with them about a thousand of their own Indian attendants. The Clerigo was preparing for the division of the rations amongst the men, when all of a sudden a Spaniard, prompted, as was thought, by the Devil, drew his sword: the rest drew theirs; and immediately they all began to hack and hew the poor Indians, who were sitting quietly near them, and offering no more resistance than so many sheep. At the precise moment when the massacre began, the Clerigo was in the apartment where the Spaniards were to sleep for the night. He had five Spaniards with him: some Indians who had brought the baggage were lying on the ground, sunk in fatigue. The five Spaniards hearing the blows of the swords of their comrades without, immediately fell upon the Indians who had brought the baggage. Las Casas, however, was enabled to prevent that slaughter, and the five Spaniards rushed out to join their comrades. The Clerigo went also, and, to his grief and horror, saw heaps of dead bodies already strewed about, "like sheaves of corn," waiting to be gathered up. "What think you these Spaniards have been doing?" exclaimed Narvaez to Las Casas; and Las Casas replied, "I commend both you and them to the Devil."<sup>1</sup> The Clerigo did not stop, however, to bandy words with the Commander, but rushed hither and thither, endeavouring to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter which was going on, of men, women,

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxx, p. 23.

and children. Then he entered the great hut, where he found that many Indians had already been slaughtered, but some had escaped by the pillars and the woodwork, and were up aloft. To them he exclaimed, "Fear not, there shall be no more slaughter, no more"; upon which, one of them, a young man of five-and-twenty, trusting to these words, came down. But, as Las Casas justly says, the Clerigo could not be in all places at once, and, as it happened, he left this hut directly, indeed, before the poor young man got down, upon which a Spaniard drew a short sword, and ran the Indian through the body. Las Casas was back in time to afford the last rites of the Church to the dying youth. To see the fearful wounds that were made, it seemed, the historian says, as if the Devil that day had guided the men to those stones in the dry bed of the river.

When inquiry was made as to who had been the author of this massacre, no one replied. This shows how causeless the massacre was, for if there had been any good reason for it, the Spaniard who first drew his sword would have justified himself, and perhaps claimed merit for his proceeding. It may have been panic in this one man; it may have been momentary madness, for such things are taken much less into account than is requisite: but, whatever the cause, the whole transaction shows the conduct of the Spaniards towards the Indians in a most unfavourable light.

Indeed the maxim which has elsewhere been laid down in this history, seems to me to continue applicable throughout—namely, that the evil consequences of war depend, not so much upon the nature of the victory, or the rage of the combatants, or the cause of the quarrel, as upon the contempt, justifiable or not, which the victorious side has for the vanquished. The wars between nations that respect one another may have most sanguinary and cruel results, but not so injurious to humanity as when Spartan conquers Helot, Mahomedan conquers Christian, Spaniard conquers Moor or Indian; or as, in general, when one nation with much civilization, or much bigotry, conquers another nation of little civilization, or of another creed. The Romans may in some instances have offered



a splendid exception to this rule ; but in the history of the world it holds good.

On the news of this massacre at Caonao,<sup>1</sup> all the inhabitants of the province deserted their *pueblos*, 'flying for refuge to the innumerable islets on that coast, called the "Garden of the Queen." The Spaniards, leaving the Indian town of Caonao, which they had desolated in the manner related above, formed a camp in the vicinity, or rather ordered the Indians to form it for them, for each Spaniard had at least eight or ten native attendants. Amongst those of Las Casas was an old Indian of much repute in the island, called Camacho, who had accompanied the Clerigo voluntarily, to be under his protection. One day, while the Spaniards were at this camp, a young Indian, sent as a spy from the former inhabitants of Caonao, came into the camp, and making his way directly to the Clerigo's tent, addressed Camacho, begging to be taken into the Clerigo's service, and requesting that he might be allowed to bring his younger brother also. Camacho informed Las Casas of this, who was delighted with the news, as it gave an opportunity of communicating with those Indians who had fled. Accordingly he received the Indian very kindly, made him some trifling presents, and besought him to bring back his countrymen to their homes, and to assure them that they should not be further molested. The young man, to whom Camacho gave the name of Adrianico, took his leave, promising to bring his brother and the rest of the Indians. Some days passed away, and Las Casas began to think that Adrianico would not be able to perform his promise, when one evening he made his appearance with his brother and a hundred and eighty Indian men and women. Children are not mentioned, and I conjecture these Indians would not run the risk of bringing them within the power of the Spaniards.

It was a melancholy sight to see the little band of fugitives, with their small bundles of household things on their shoulders, and their strings of beads as presents for the Clerigo and the Spaniards, returning, perforce, for

<sup>1</sup> "No quedó plante ni mamante."—LAS CASAS. A proverbial expression :—"There remained neither the child that sucks nor the one that chirrupa."

want of food—and perhaps too with some of that inextinguishable fondness for home which makes so large a part of the world habitable to men—to the spot where they had but lately seen such cruelties perpetrated on their friends and relations. The Clerigo was delighted to see them, but very sad too, when he considered their gentleness, their humility, their poverty, and their sufferings.<sup>1</sup> Pamphilo de Narvaez united with Las Casas in doing all he could to assure these poor people of their safety; and they were dismissed to their empty homes. This example of good treatment reassured the Indians of that vicinity, who in consequence returned to their houses.

The Spaniards pursued their purpose of pacificating Cuba, now taking to their vessels and coasting along the northern shore, and now traversing the interior of the country. When they came to the province of Havana, they found that the Indians, having heard of the massacre of Caonao and other such proceedings, had all fled; upon which Las Casas sent messengers to the different caciques, the messengers bearing mysterious pieces of paper inserted at the end of sticks, which had before been found so efficacious, and assuring these caciques of safety and protection. The result was, that eighteen or nineteen of these caciques came and placed themselves in the power of the Spaniards; and it is an astonishing instance of the barbarity and folly of the Spanish captain Narvaez, that he put them in chains, and expressed an intention of burning them alive. Probably he thought that the province by this means, losing all its chiefs at one blow, would become hopeless and obedient. The Clerigo in the strongest manner protested against this monstrous treachery, to which he would have been so unwilling a party; and partly by entreaties, partly by threats, succeeded in procuring the release of all these Caciques except one, the most powerful, who was carried to Velazquez, but was afterwards set at liberty.

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 28.

[A Cédula of 20th March 1512 refers to the pleasure felt by Ferdinand in hearing that the Indians of Cuba were more reasonable and inclined to religion than those of the other islands.]

This seems a strange method of assuring and pacifying the Indians; but their want of resources, and the absence of any experience of such war as they had now to encounter, if they made any resistance, caused them easily to succumb. The island of Cuba was now considered to be pacificated.<sup>1</sup> Pamphilo de Narvaez and Las Casas were ordered to join Velazquez at Xagua; and the attention of the Governor was directed to the peaceful arts of founding cities, discovering mines, and giving Indians in *repartimiento*.

The names of the towns which Diego Velazquez founded were, La Villa de Trinidad, La Villa de Sancta Spiritus, San Salvador, Santiago, and Havana — most of them majestic and holy names, but much abused, as such names have often been, both before and after these transactions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There was an expedition sent to the province farthest westward, called Haniguanica; but no details are preserved of its doings. "Diego Velazquez sent to Narvaez to pacify, as they call it, the farthest province at the western end of the island, which the Indians call Haniguanica; because the affair is so old I do not remember with what effusion of human blood this was done, although present at the departure and return of the expedition."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxx, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> [In view of the methods practised by Diego Velazquez and his subordinates, it is worth noticing that a series of Cédulas was addressed to him, praising and rewarding him for his successful administration. One of 12th December 1512 thanks him for the pacification of Cuba and his treatment of the Indians; another, of 8th April 1513, again praises him for his success in pacifying the island, "because I much desire that all the diligence possible shall be used to convert the natives of this island, I command that you undertake this by all means possible since in nothing can you do me greater service." Following this is a Cédula of 13th April, making Velazquez governor of the fort and town of Asuncion, with a salary of 20,000 maravedis a year. On 28th February 1515, he is again praised, but "the principal thing I recommend you is that you have great care for the conversion and good treatment of the Indians of the island, and endeavour every way that the Indians be taught and indoctrinated in our holy Catholic Faith, and remain in it, because we would be without burden on our conscience, and that you as well may free yourself of the obligation you are under to have it done." A Cédula of 7th July 1515 directed that no *Residencia* was to be taken of Velazquez and the officials of Cuba, the King being well satisfied with their services. Besides the actual material advantages of not being called upon for an account of his administration, the exemption was to be considered a great honour. In November 1518 he was made

Adelantado of all lands discovered by him, and granted one-fifteenth of all the revenues obtained from them; a privilege which, of course, induced him to send out exploring expeditions, and, to his misfortune, he sent out Cortes, who repudiated him as he had repudiated Diego Columbus. From an order to the Jeronimite Fathers when they were in Española, it may be gathered that Velazquez really had some idea of public works and civilising processes. It runs, "Although Diego Velazquez, governor of the said island, has opened roads throughout the island from one town to another and from the towns to the principal mines, there is much necessity to make other roads . . . and in ordering them to be made at our cost our revenues would be much increased, and the said island improved and the Indians better managed and more mines discovered, therefore we order you to open up the said roads, such as may be necessary, at our cost."]





## BOOK VIII

# LAS CASAS AS A COLONIST AND A REFORMER

### CHAPTER I

THE CONVERSION OF LAS CASAS—HIS VOYAGE TO SPAIN—  
THE DEATH OF KING FERDINAND

THE course of this narrative now becomes closely connected with the life of Las Casas,—so much so, that his private affairs and solitary thoughts are matters of history, as they had a most important bearing on the welfare of no inconsiderable portion of the New World.

Las Casas, as the reader will hereafter see, had many troubles and sorrows to bear; but at this particular period he was blessed with that which is always one of the greatest blessings, but which, I sometimes fancy, like hospitality in a partially civilized country, seems to have flourished more, as being more needed, in rude, hard times. In a word, he had a real friend. This friend's name was Pedro de la Renteria. Their friendship was most intimate, and had subsisted for many years. De Renteria, as often happens in friendship, presented a curious contrast to Las Casas. He was a man who might well have been a monk,—a devout, contemplative person, given much to solitude and prayer; and Las Casas mentions a trait in his character which exactly coincides with the rest of it,—namely, that he was a most liberal man, but his liberality seemed rather to flow from habit and a carelessness about worldly goods than from a deliberate judgment exercised in matters of benevolence. This good man's occupations, however, were entirely secular, and he was employed by Diego Velazquez as Alcalde.

When the island was considered to be settled and the Governor began to give *repartimientos*, knowing the friendship that existed between Las Casas and Renteria, he gave them a large *pueblo* in common, and Indians in *repartimiento*.<sup>1</sup> This land of theirs was about a league from Xagua, on the river Arimá; <sup>2</sup> and there they lived, the *padre* having the greater part of the management of the joint affairs, as being much the more lively and the busier man. Indeed, he confesses that he was as much engaged as others in sending his Indians to the mines and making as large a profit of their labour as possible. At the same time, however, he was kind to them personally, and provided carefully for their sustenance; but, to use his own words, "he took no more heed than the other Spaniards to bethink himself that his Indians were unbelievers, and of the duty that there was on his part to give them instruction, and to bring them to the bosom of the Church of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

As there was but one other clerigo in the whole island, and no friar, it was necessary for Las Casas occasionally to say mass and to preach. It happened that he had to do so, on "the Feast of Pentecost," in the year 1514; and studying either the sermons that he preached himself or that he heard the other clerigo preach at this time, he came to thinking with himself on certain passages ("authorities" he calls them) of Scripture. The 34th chapter of *Ecclesiasticus*, the 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd verses first arrested, and then enchained, his attention:—

"He that sacrificeth of a thing wrongfully gotten, his offering is ridiculous: and the gifts of unjust men are not accepted.

<sup>1</sup> "He gave him (Pedro de Renteria) jointly with the Father (Las Casas) Indians in *repartimiento* and gave both a flourishing *Pueblo* with which the Father commenced to employ himself in making a profit and in putting part of them to the mines, paying more attention to that than to teach doctrine to the Indians as if that had been his chief duty; but in that matter the good Father was only as blind for the time as the laymen of his flock."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> "We came to a *Pueblo* of Indians called Vaguarama, at that time belonging to Father Bartolomé de las Casas, whom I knew later as a Dominican Friar who came to be Bishop of Echiapa."—BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 7. See also LAS CASAS, *Hist.*, lxxv, p. 253.

<sup>3</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 253.



"The Most High is not pleased with the offerings of the wicked: neither is he pacified for sin by the multitude of sacrifices.

"Whoso bringeth an offering of the goods of the poor doeth as one that killeth the son before his father's eyes.

"The bread of the needy is their life; he that defraudeth him thereof is a man of blood.

"He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him; and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a bloodshedder."

I think that the Clerigo might have dwelt upon one of the remaining verses of the chapter with great profit:—

"When one prayeth, and another curseth, whose voice will the Lord hear?"

In recounting the steps which led to his conversion, Las Casas takes care to say, that what he had formerly heard the Dominicans preach in Hispaniola, was, at this critical period of his life, of great service to him. Then he had only slighted their words; but he now particularly remembers a contest he had with a certain *Religioso*, who refused to give him absolution, because he possessed Indians. This is an instance of the great mistake it may be to hold your tongue about the truth, for fear it should provoke contest and harden an adversary in his opinion. The truths which he has heard sink into a man at some time or other: and, even when he retires from a contest, apparently fixed in his own conceits, it would often be found that if he had to renew the contest the next day, he would not take up quite the same position that he had maintained before. The good seed sown by the Dominicans had now, after having been buried for some years, found a most fruitful soil; and it shot up in the ardent soul of the Clerigo like grain in that warm land of the tropics upon which he stood. Las Casas studied the principles of the matter: from the principles he turned to considering the facts about him; and with his candid mind thus fully aroused, he soon came to the conclusion that the system of *repartimientos* was iniquitous,<sup>1</sup> and that he must preach against it.

<sup>1</sup> "Then he passed some days thinking carefully over this, and each

What then must he do with his own Indians? Alas, it was necessary to give them up! Not that he grudged giving them up for any worldly motive, but he felt that no one in Cuba would be as considerate towards them as he, even in the days of his darkness, had been; and that they would be worked to death—as indeed they were. But still, the answer to all the sermons he might preach, would be his own *repartimiento* of Indians. He resolved to give them up.

Now, as Las Casas was not only the friend, but the partner, of Pedro de Renteria, this determination on the part of the Clerigo was a matter which would affect the interests of his friend; and, unluckily, Renteria happened to be absent from home at this time, having gone to Jamaica upon their joint affairs. Las Casas, however, went to the Governor, and laid open his mind to him upon the subject of the *repartimientos*, putting the matter boldly to Velazquez, as it concerned his lordship's own salvation, as well as that of Las Casas and the rest of the Spaniards. The Clerigo added, that he must give up his own slaves, but wished that this determination might be kept secret till Pedro de Renteria should return.

The Governor was greatly astonished: for Las Casas, who, no doubt, took warmly in hand anything he did take up at all, passed for a man fond of gain, and very busy in the things of this world. Velazquez, in replying, besought the Clerigo to consider the matter well—to take fifteen days, indeed, to think of it—and to do nothing that he would repent of afterwards. Las Casas thanked his lordship for his kindness, but bade him count the fifteen days as already past, and added, that if he, Las Casas, were to repent and were to ask for the Indians again, even with tears of blood, God would punish the Governor severely if he were to listen to such a request. Thus ended the interview; and it is

day more and more assured by what he read respecting the law and actual facts, applying one to the other, he determined to take upon himself the demonstration of the truth that the proceedings relating to the Indians were unjust and tyrannical."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 254.

to the Governor's credit, that he ever afterwards held the Clerigo in greater esteem than before.

Las Casas, however, did not long confine his efforts at conversion to the Governor alone, nor did he conceal his intention until his partner had returned home; for, when preaching on the day of "The Assumption of Our Lady," he took occasion to mention publicly the conclusion he had come to as regards his own affairs, and also to urge upon his congregation in the strongest manner his conviction of the danger to their souls if they retained their *repartimientos* of Indians. All were amazed; some were struck with compunction; others were as much surprized to hear it called a sin to make use of the Indians, as if they had been told it were sinful to make use of the beasts of the field.

After Las Casas had uttered many exhortations both in public and in private, and had found that they were of little avail, he meditated how to go to the fountain head of authority, the King of Spain. His resources were exhausted: he had not a *maravedí*, or the means of getting one, except by selling a mare which was worth a hundred *pesos*. Resolving, however, to go, he wrote to Renteria, telling him that business of importance was taking him to Castille, and that unless Renteria could return immediately, he, Las Casas, could not wait to see him—a thing, as he adds, not imaginable by the good Renteria, so firm was their friendship.

It was a singular coincidence that, not long before this time, the services of the Church had also brought into active existence very serious thoughts in the breast of Pedro de Renteria. There may be a community of thought not expressed in language; and, perhaps, these two good men, while apparently engaged in their ordinary secular business, had, unknown to themselves, been communicating to each other generous thoughts about their poor Indians, which had not hitherto been embodied in words. While Renteria was waiting in Jamaica for the despatch of his business, he went into a Franciscan monastery to spend his Lent in "retreat" (these pauses from the world are not to be despised!):

he, too, had been thinking over the miseries of the Indians, and the shape his thoughts had taken was, whether something for the children, at least, might not be done. Finally, he had come to the conclusion to ask the King's leave to found colleges where he might collect the young Indians, and have them instructed and brought up. For this purpose, Renteria resolved to go to Spain himself, in order to obtain the King's sanction; and, immediately after receiving the letter of the Clerigo, he hurried back to Cuba.

As the meeting of the friends took place in the presence of others, and as Renteria was welcomed back by the Governor in person, they had no opportunity for any explanation until they were alone together at night: then, in their dignified Spanish way, they agreed who should speak first, and after a friendly contention, the humble Renteria spoke first, which was the mark of the inferior. "I have thought sometimes," he said, "upon the miseries, sufferings, and evil life which these native people are leading; and how from day to day they are all being consumed, as the people were in Hispaniola. It has appeared to me that it would be an act of piety to go and inform the King of this—for he cannot know anything of it,—and to ask him that at the least he should give us his royal licence to found some colleges, where the children might be brought up and taught, and where we may shelter them from such violent and vehement destruction."<sup>1</sup> Las Casas heard Renteria's words with astonishment and reverential joy, thinking it a sign of divine favour, that so good a man as Renteria should thus unexpectedly confirm his own resolve.

When it was the Clerigo's turn to speak, he thus began—"You must know, sir and brother" (for these people did not omit the courtesy which, however varied in its form, affection should not presume to dispense with), "that my purpose is no other than to go and seek a remedy for these unhappy men" (the Indians). The Clerigo then gave a full account of what he had already thought and done in this matter, during Renteria's absence. His friend replied in all humility, that it

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxx, p. 259.

was not for him to go, but for Las Casas, who, as a lettered man (*letrado*), would know better how to establish what he should urge. Renteria begged, therefore, that the stock and merchandize which he had just brought with him from Jamaica, and the farm, their joint property, might be turned into money to equip Las Casas for his journey and his stay at court; and he added, "May God our Lord be He who may ever keep you in the way and defend you."

The farm was sold, and in this manner Las Casas was provided for his journey. Bad as the world is said to be, there is always money forthcoming for any good purpose, when people really believe in the proposer.

At this time Pedro de Córdova, the prelate of the Dominicans in the New World, sent over four brethren of his order from Hispaniola to Cuba. They were very welcome to Las Casas, as he was to them. They listened with interest to his account of the state of the Indians in Cuba; and Brother Bernardo, the most eloquent and learned amongst them, preached to the same purpose and with fully as much animation,<sup>1</sup> as the Clerigo himself had done. Their sermons terrified the hearers, but did not seem to change their way of proceeding. The Dominicans, accordingly, resolved to send back one of their brotherhood, Gutierrez de Ampudia, to Pedro de Córdova, to inform him of the state of things at Cuba. It was arranged that Gutierrez should accompany Las Casas, who, by giving out that he was going to Paris, to

<sup>1</sup> The following is a portion of a sermon preached by Father Bernardo:—"Now since we came we have preached to you of your wicked actions in oppressing, harassing, and killing these peoples: not only have you not sought to amend, but, as we have heard, each day you do worse, shedding the blood of so many who have done you no harm. I supplicate Almighty God that that innocent blood be a witness and a testimony against your cruelty on that day of Judgment when you shall not have excuse in any pretended ignorance in not being told, and warned, and having made plain to you the iniquities done to these nations. You yourselves are the authors of your works, and will be the authors of your punishments for them in the time to come."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxx, p. 264.

[Las Casas describes the sermon as "so comminatory and terrible that it made my flesh creep."]

study there and take a degree, contrived to leave Cuba without attracting the notice of the Governor, who might, perhaps, have detained him, had his true purpose and destination been known.

So Las Casas quitted the island of Cuba in company with Gutierrez de Ampudia and another Dominican, without being much observed by any one, or meeting with any hindrance.

After their departure from the island, the cruelties of the Spaniards towards the Indians increased; and, as the Indians naturally enough sought for some refuge in flight, the Spaniards trained dogs to pursue them. The Indians then had recourse to suicide as a means of escape, for they believed in a future state of being, where ease and felicity, they thought, awaited them. Accordingly they put themselves to death, whole families doing so together, and villages inviting other villages to join them in their departure from a world that was no longer tolerable to them. Some hanged themselves; others drank the poisonous juice of the Yuca.<sup>1</sup>

One pathetic and yet ludicrous occurrence is mentioned in connexion with this practice of suicide amongst the Indians. A number of them belonging to one master had resolved to hang themselves, and so to escape from their labours and their sufferings. The master being made aware of their intention, came upon them just as they were about to carry it into effect. "Go seek me a rope, too," he exclaimed, "for I must hang myself with you." He then gave them to understand that he could

<sup>1</sup> [BENZONI (*Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1) says of Española also, "the natives finding themselves intolerably oppressed . . . went to the woods and there hung themselves, after having killed their children, saying it was far better to die than to live so miserably serving such and so many ferocious tyrants and wicked thieves. . . . Some threw themselves from high cliffs down precipices, others jumped into the sea, others again into rivers, and others starved themselves to death. Sometimes they killed themselves with flint knives, others pierced their bosoms or their sides with pointed stakes. Finally out of the 2,000,000 of original inhabitants, through the number of suicides and other deaths occasioned by the oppressive labour imposed by the Spaniards and their cruelties, there are not 150 now to be found, and this has been their way of making Christians of them." This was written after 1541; see also Bk. xiv, chap. vii, of this work.]

not live without them, as they were so useful to him; and that he must go where they were going. They, believing that they would not get rid of him even in a future state of existence, agreed to remain where they were; and with sorrow laid aside their ropes to resume their labours.

It was an additional evil for the Indians that some of that swarm of unfortunate men who had come with Pedrarias to Darien, betook themselves with their hungry ferocity to Cuba; and, as Las Casas notices,<sup>1</sup> proved afterwards most cruel towards the Indians.

Meanwhile, Las Casas and his companions were pursuing their journey, having arrived at the port of Hanaguana, in Hispaniola. Father Gutierrez, unhappily, fell ill of a fever and died on the road; but Las Casas reached St. Domingo in safety. On arriving there, he found that the Prelate of the Dominicans was absent, having just commenced a voyage for the purpose of founding monasteries in the Tierra-firme, being accompanied not only by monks of his own order, but also by Franciscans, and by some monks from Picardy, who had lately come to the Indies.

This voyage of Pedro de Córdova was undertaken in accordance with a plan which, when in Spain, he had communicated to King Ferdinand. After the laws of Burgos had been passed, and when Pedro de Córdova saw that the business for which he had come to court was settled, he prayed the King that he and other

<sup>1</sup> "At this time there came to the island in which was Diego Velazquez many gentlemen from Darien of those taken there by Pedrarias, who were ruined and eager, and who set about restoring their fortunes, some of whom were afterwards most cruel to the Indians."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 261.

[In a memorial on the "pacification" of Cuba, addressed to Cardinal Ximenes by Las Casas, he says that in three or four months the Spaniards killed one hundred thousand Indians by working them in the mines until they dropped from exhaustion or starvation, and that the women were taken as concubines, whipped, and treated most cruelly, new kinds of torture being tried on them. Antonio Velazquez and Panfilo de Narvaez, in their reply to this memorial, confine themselves to vague and general contradiction, and abuse of Las Casas as "a light-minded person, of little authority or credit, speaking of things he neither saw nor knew correctly."] ]

Dominican brethren might be allowed to go from Hispaniola to that part of the Tierra-firme nearest to the island, to preach the Faith there. This good man thought that in the Tierra-firme his efforts for the conversion of the Indians would be secure from hindrance on the part of his lay countrymen. The King assented readily to this plan, and furnished Pedro de Córdova with the necessary orders to the authorities at Hispaniola for ships and provisions. Moreover, at Seville the Prelate of the Dominicans was supplied with bells, vestments, and all things requisite for the performance of the services of his church. As for the men necessary to carry out this important mission, Pedro de Córdova had no difficulty in finding them; and he had only occasion to go to one monastery, that of St. Stephen at Salamanca, from whence he was able to choose fourteen brethren to take with him to the Indies.

On his return from Spain to St. Domingo, Pedro de Córdova despatched a vessel to the Tierra-firme with three monks of his order,—Antonio Montesino, already well known to the readers of this history as the preacher of a memorable sermon, Francis de Córdova, a near relative of the Prelate, and a lay brother named Juan Garces. These brethren were to gain experience of the new country and the new people, and to prepare the way for the entrance of a more numerous band of missionaries. Whether intentionally or not, the part of the Tierra-firme which the monks came to was not the Tierra-firme proper, the nearest part to Hispaniola, but the Pearl Coast. Montesino, fortunately for himself, fell ill at the island of San Juan, at which the vessel touched first. The other two Dominicans proceeded to the Pearl Coast, and being set on shore, established themselves at a place some twenty leagues from Cumaná, called Piritú de Maracapana. The Indians received the Dominican monks with joy and hospitality, and the vessel which had brought them returned. In a short time one of the Spanish vessels connected with the pearl fisheries touched at this part of the coast. Pedro de Córdova did not prove happy in his conjecture that the coast would be free from molestation on the part of his lay countrymen;



but at the time that he made his request to the King, little was known of the Tierra-firme. In general, when the Indians perceived a Spanish vessel approaching the coast, they fled; but now, relying upon the presence of the Dominicans, the natives welcomed the new-comers, and gave them provisions. After a few days spent amicably, the Cacique of that region, with his family and servants, amounting in number to seventeen persons, accepted an invitation on board the Spanish vessel. If the Cacique thought at all about any danger from his visit, he must have thought that the Dominican brethren who were left in the hands of his subjects, constituted a sufficient guarantee for his safety; but no sooner were the Indians on board, than the vessel weighed anchor and sailed away. As might be imagined, the Indians on shore instantly resolved to kill the Dominican brethren, who, with great difficulty appeased them, and contrived to obtain a respite, promising that the Cacique and his family should be brought back in four months. In a few days another Spanish vessel made its appearance; the Dominicans communicated with the crew of this vessel, told them of the straits they were in, and gave them letters to Pedro de Córdova at St. Domingo.

Meanwhile, the pearl-fishing, man-stealing villains of the first Spanish vessel arrived at St. Domingo. They had sold, or were selling, the poor Cacique and his family, when the Judges of Appeal came down upon the prize, said that these captives had not been made with the proper licence, and forthwith divided the Indians amongst themselves (the Judges!). In a few days after this transaction, the vessel whose crew had taken charge of the letters from Francis de Córdova and Juan Garces entered the port of St. Domingo. The captain of the pearl-fishers, seeing his villany on the point of being discovered, fled at once to a monastery of the order of La Merced, which was just then being established, and took the habit of a lay-brother. He hardly fancied, I imagine, that his foul trick upon the poor Dominicans would in a few weeks make a monk of him! No sooner were the letters from the captive monks delivered at the monastery, than a great ferment,

no doubt, arose among the brotherhood, eager to rescue their unhappy brethren on the Pearl Coast. Antonio Montesino had by this time recovered from his illness, and had returned from San Juan to St. Domingo. He went to the Judges of Appeal, and prayed to have the Cacique and his family liberated and sent back to the Tierra-firme. If Montesino could preach with such force as he did, when he excited the rage of the colonists about their dealings with the Indians, what must he not have said now? But all was in vain. The Judges of Appeal did not give up their slaves: and the Indians of the Tierra-firme, after waiting the time agreed upon of four months, put to death their two prisoners, Francis de Córdova and Juan Garces.

This transaction is important, as it will have other consequences than the death of these two poor monks. But in itself it claims our notice, as showing the disposition of those with whom then rested the supreme power in the Indies. ✓

Not daunted, however, by this calamity which had befallen his first mission to the Tierra-firme, Pedro de Córdova had himself just set out upon another like expedition when Las Casas arrived. It happened that a great storm compelled the Prelate and his company to return to port; and thus Las Casas was fortunate enough to obtain an interview with one of whom he ever speaks with great veneration, the Prelate of the Dominicans, Pedro de Córdova.

This excellent monk received Las Casas very kindly, and applauded his purpose greatly, but at the same time gave but little hope of its being brought to a successful termination in King Ferdinand's time, on account of the credit which, he said, the Bishop of Burgos and the Secretary, Lope Conchillos, had with the King, and their being entirely in favour of the system of *repartimientos*, and moreover possessing Indians themselves.

The Clerigo, grieved but not dismayed at these words, declared his intention to persevere, to the delight of Pedro de Córdova, who, as the Dominican monastery was very poor, and only partly built, resolved to send Antonio Montesino in company with Las Casas to the King, to

ask alms for completing the building. Moreover, if any opportunity should offer, he was to aid the Clerigo in his mission. And so in September 1515, Las Casas, Montesino, and another brother embarked at St. Domingo for Spain.

Before giving an account of the proceedings of Las Casas at the court of Spain, it is necessary to mention briefly what had been done in the course of the preceding year, with respect to the Indians, both in Hispaniola and in the mother-country. Rodrigo de Albuquerque, a near relative of a member of the Council in whom the King put great trust, had been sent to make a new division of the Indians, and he was called *Repartidor*. What occasion there was for this new repartition, is not told; and it is difficult to imagine any good reason for such a proceeding.<sup>1</sup> It did no good to the Indians: in fact it seems to have riveted their fetters, as it gave the Indians for two lives,—for the life of the person to whom Albuquerque made the *repartimiento*, and for the life of his next heir, whether a son or a daughter. It created the most vehement rage and opposition amongst the old colonists, some of whom found themselves deprived altogether of the services of the Indians. And it was an affront to the Governor, Don Diego Columbus, as this power of giving away Indians was one of his chief privileges, and one most likely to render the Spanish colonists obedient to him.

Albuquerque was much blamed for the manner in which he exercised his office, and he was accused of bribery. It was an office in which it must have been impossible to give content. The rapid diminution of the Indians is shown by this repartition, if we can trust the figures of Las Casas, as I think we can in this case, for they were

<sup>1</sup> [It appears to have been owing to the influence of private individuals and courtiers in Spain who had been steadily refused repartimientos by Ovando, and, following him, by Diego Columbus. Ferdinand is said to have signed, without reading, the instructions which contained a clause taking away the Indians given by Diego Columbus. In the fresh division, the secretary Lope Conchillos got 800, his steward 400, Fonseca 300, the Licentiate Zapata 200, and many others were equally favoured.—*The Licentiate Zuazo to M. de Chievres*, 22nd January 1518.]

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probably taken from official documents. When the Treasurer Pasamonte came to Hispaniola, in 1508, there were seventy thousand Indians; when Don Diego Columbus obtained the government of that island, there were forty thousand Indians; but when Albuquerque came to divide,<sup>1</sup> there were only thirteen thousand or fourteen thousand Indians left.<sup>2</sup> When Hispaniola was first discovered, there were, according to Las Casas, three millions of Indians, according to the Licentiate Zuazo, one million one hundred and thirty thousand.<sup>3</sup>

The Governor, Don Diego Columbus, returned to Spain, or was recalled, at the end of the year 1514, in which Albuquerque came to make the repartition. Whether Don Diego's representations had any weight at court, or whether the intense disgust which Albuquerque's repartition had produced amongst the colonists had any effect there, does not appear; but the Licentiate Ibarra was selected to go to Hispaniola to take a *residencia* of Marcos de Aguilar, the principal Alcalde in St. Domingo, to see how the ordinances in favour of the Indians were executed, and also to make a new repartition. I am not aware whether the same process was to be gone through in Cuba, and other of the Spanish possessions, but it may have

<sup>1</sup> [In 1514.]

<sup>2</sup> [Unlike most conquering races, the Spaniards—at any rate the politicians—had no objection to legitimate unions between conquerors and conquered, and encouraged them as a means to replace the waste caused by their statesmanship. A Cédula of 19th October 1514 declares,—“Being informed that if the natives of these kingdoms of Castile who dwell in Española were to marry with the native women of the island it would be very useful, and redound to the service of God and ours, and increase the population of the said island, and having had the aforesaid, and the benefit that may proceed from it, under consideration, we, by these presents, give leave and licence to all persons, natives of these kingdoms, that they may freely marry with the native women of the said island without incurring any loss or punishment.”—*Col. de Doc. Intd. relativos al . . . Antiguas Posesiones Españolas*, ix, p. 22.]

<sup>3</sup> [Even the ordinary Spaniard must have thought the amount of gold obtained dearly purchased. The King's fifth from Española in 1517 was only 26,307 pesos (*Doc. Ined. . . de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas*, xi, p. 255). Sir Arthur Helps values the peso at 4s. 8½d.; the amount of treasure obtained from the Indies before the discovery of Potosi has usually been vastly exaggerated.]

been so; and certainly the King at this time sent an account to the Governor of Cuba of the motives upon which his Council had come to the conclusion, that Indians were to be given in *repartimiento*. These motives were the ones that we are familiar with, namely, that converse with the Spaniards would Christianize the Indians; and that this converse was to be obtained by the system of *repartimientos*.

Before Ibarra could enter upon his duties to any purpose, he died, having, according to rumour, been "assisted" to quit the world; for he was said to be a just man, and was feared. Another Licentiate, named Lebron, was appointed in Ibarra's place; he was not to have the same general powers as Ibarra, but was to proceed with the repartition of the Indians. This frequent repartition was one of the greatest grievances that can be imagined, both to the Indians and the Spanish colonists; and, by a very competent authority (Zuazo), is put forward as one of the chief causes of the diminution in numbers of the natives. Change of climate, change of water<sup>1</sup> (which is particularly noticed as one of the causes), change of masters, and the indifference consequent on that, in the minds of the masters, to the welfare of their Indians, all so wrought together in this matter, that the most rapid rate of increase known in population shows small when compared with the rate of decrease of these Indian nations.

The affairs of the Indies were in the state above described when Las Casas and his companion Antonio Montesino, arrived at Seville. Montesino presented Las Casas to the Archbishop of Seville, Don Fray Diego de Deza, a prelate in great favour with King Ferdinand, who had been persuading the King to come to his diocese, as being an excellent climate for the aged. This advice Ferdinand

<sup>1</sup> "So that as many of these Indians were accustomed to the air of their native places, and to drink the water from 'jagueyes'—which are standing pools of rain water, or other heavy waters,—when they were moved to where they had the light cold water of springs and rivers, and to unhealthy places, and as they went naked, there died from these causes an infinite number of Indians, putting aside those dead from the terrible overwork and fatigue caused by bad treatment."—*Documentos Inéditos*, ii, p. 353.

had listened to, and was now making his way from Burgos to the South of Spain. The Archbishop received Las Casas graciously, and furnished him with letters to the King and to some of the courtiers. Armed with these letters, the Clerigo continued his journey, and found the King at Plasencia, arriving there a few days before Christmas in the year 1515. Las Casas shunned the ministers Lope de Conchillos and the Bishop of Burgos, knowing how prejudiced they were likely to be; but he sought an interview with the King, and, obtaining it,<sup>1</sup> spoke at large to the Monarch of the motives which had brought him to Spain. He had come, he said, to inform his Highness of the wrongs and sufferings of the Indians, and of how they died without a knowledge of the Faith and without the Sacraments, of the ruin of the country, of the diminution of the revenue; and he concluded by saying, that as these things concerned both the King's conscience and the welfare of his realm, and as to be understood they must be stated in detail, he begged for another and a long audience. Ferdinand, now an old and ailing man, whose death was near at hand, did not deny Las Casas the second audience he asked for, but said he would willingly hear him some day during the Christmas Festival.

In the meantime, Las Casas poured his complaints against the King's ministers, and his narrative of the wrongs of the Indians, into the ears of the King's Confessor, Tomas de Matienzo, who, repeating them to the King, received orders to tell Las Casas to go to Seville and wait there for the King's coming (Ferdinand was about to set off immediately), when he would give him a long audience, and provide a remedy for the evils he complained of. The Confessor advised Las Casas to see the Bishop of Burgos, who had the chief management of Indian affairs, and also Conchillos, for, as he observed, the matter would ultimately have to come into their hands; and, perhaps, when they had heard all the miseries and evils which the Clerigo could tell them, they would soften. Las Casas, to show that he was not obstinate, sought out these ministers, and submitted his views and his information to them. Conchillos received the Clerigo with the utmost

<sup>1</sup> [On 23rd December 1515.]

courtesy and kindness, and seems to have listened a little to what Las Casas had to tell him: the Bishop, on the contrary, was very rough. Las Casas finished his audience with the Bishop by informing him how seven thousand children had perished in three months:<sup>1</sup> and, as the Clerigo went on detailing the account of the death of these children, the ungodly Bishop broke in with these words, "Look you, what a droll fool; what is this to me, and what is it to the King?" (*Mirad, que donoso necio, que se me da á mí, y que se le da al Rey?*) to which Las Casas replied, "Is it nothing to your Lordship, or to the King, that all these souls should perish? Oh great and eternal God! And to whom then is it of any concern?" And, having said these words, he took his leave.

Considering the number of excellent churchmen whose conduct comes out nobly in this history, it is not surprising that we should meet with one bad bishop; but it is almost heartbreaking to consider, that it is *the* one who could have done more than all the rest, to redress the wrongs of the Indians, and to recover affairs in the New World. Let men in power see what one bad appointment may do!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I do not know to what transaction he alludes.

<sup>2</sup> The Bishop of Burgos must have been one of those ready, bold, and dexterous men, with a great reputation for fidelity, who are such favourites with princes. He went through so many stages of preferment, that it is sometimes difficult to trace him; and the student of early American history will have a bad opinion of many Spanish bishops, if he does not discover that it is Bishop Fonseca who re-appears under various designations. Since his first introduction to the reader, he had held successively the Arch-diaconate of Seville, the Bishoprics of Badajoz, Cordova, Palencia and Conde, the Archbishopric of Rosano (in Italy), with the Bishopric of Burgos, besides the office of Capellan mayor to Isabella, and afterwards to Ferdinand.

The Indies had a narrow escape of having him for their Patriarch. In the year 1513, Ferdinand instructed his ambassador at Rome to apply for the institution of a universal patriarchate of the Indies to be given to Archbishop Fonseca. The following words, in which the King recommends him, are remarkable. "And because of such persons some are fit to go and carry the affair into effect personally, and others to further it and prepare the way from here, and the Very Reverend Father in Christ Don Juan de Fonseca, Archbishop of Rosano, our Chaplain in ordinary and of our Council, of noble descent and belonging to the principal nobility of these kingdoms has, as is known to you, from the time of the discovery of the Indies until now

Las Casas soon after left the court for Seville, where almost the first thing he heard of on his arrival, was the death of the King, which took place at Madrigalejos, a little village on the road to Seville, on the 23rd January 1516.

Before entering upon a new reign, some words remain to be said about King Ferdinand. This is not the place for discussing his general character and government; but, as regards his administration of the Indies, it has now been minutely brought forward, and we may fairly have some opinion upon it. His granting *repartimientos* to the courtiers was doubtless wrong: his sanctioning the removal of Indians from one island to another was wrong: we, with our lights upon the subject, may also say, that the whole system of *repartimientos* was injudicious and oppressive. But this is no reason for concluding that Ferdinand, in adopting the views of his Council in this matter, was not really influenced by the reasoning prevalent in his day, which made these *repartimientos* prominent and necessary means towards the conversion of the Indians. It is but fair, too, to notice, on Ferdinand's behalf, that when the Junta (summoned in 1512) came to him with a conclusion unfavourable to the liberty of the Indians, he returned the Indian question again upon their hands, saying that it must be placed upon the basis arranged in Isabella's Will, which pronounced the Indians to be free men.

Again, in the instructions, before alluded to, which

been employed, and employs himself at present by our command, in the governing and ordering of them; and by his industry, vigilance, diligence, and care, his proved fidelity without any other purpose than to serve our Lord and to fulfil our commands, has been and is the principal occasion of many benefits that have happened and happen in the said Indies, and with much zeal always will continue his labours that in the time to come all these nations may be converted to our Lord . . . you will beg our very Holy Father on our behalf, in virtue of our Letter of Credence which goes with this that having taken into consideration . . . he will institute the said Don Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca universal Patriarch of the Indies in like manner to the other Patriarchates of the Church."—NAVARRETE, *Col. Dip.*, No. 174.

What answer the Pope gave to this application does not appear; but it is at any rate satisfactory to find that Bishop Fonseca was not appointed Patriarch of the Indies.



were given in 1514 to Pedrarias the Governor of Darien, the King makes a suggestion which may thus be paraphrased. "You will have to consult your principal men about making war; but remember that it is their interest to obtain Indians by war, therefore allow for that in any credit you may give to their advice. Listen rather to the Bishop of Darien and the priests who accompany him, who are less likely to be guided by passion and self-interest than the rest." This is humane and considerate, especially when we recollect that the King himself was one of those who profited by wars with the Indians, as he received a share of the prisoners taken in war. If it is said, that at this period of his life, his affairs were mainly managed by his ministers (though I think this cannot be maintained), and that these instructions to Pedrarias, for example, were not his, then in that case, he must be relieved from much of the responsibility of the injudicious measures passed at that time.

With regard to the personal treatment of the Indians, the reader will have seen, that in some of the King's letters there are minute orders for the good treatment of his new subjects. It were certainly to be wished that he had repressed the general ardour for getting gold, instead of encouraging it. But we must remember the necessities which his wars brought upon him. In one of his short letters to Don Diego Columbus, he says, "No gold rests" with us; and his last letter to his successor, Charles the Fifth, in which Ferdinand commends, in the most touching manner, Germaine his queen to Charles's protection, shows the destitute state, as regards money, in which the King died. Again, whatever may be charged against Ferdinand, it cannot be said that he knowingly sent inferior men to take authority in the Indies. Bobadilla's appointment was a pure mistake; Ferdinand and Isabella supposed that they had chosen a high-minded, just man, while in reality he was a narrow-minded, hard, short-seeing man,—a sort of mistake that has frequently occurred. But I am not aware that there is any other instance of a manifestly bad appointment having been made by Ferdinand, or of any appointment having been made from any corrupt motives.

It is probable that in later life Ferdinand trusted too much to his ministers; and it must always be the case in a pure monarchy, that it partakes of the failings of one man, and that its action is apt to grow feeble as his powers decay.<sup>1</sup> The affairs, however, of Spain and of the Indies would have gone well enough, if all the powers of the state had been as well represented as the head of it was by the general ability and worth of King Ferdinand.

The last notice that I have been able to find of what were the King's views with regard to the importation of negroes into the Indies, is to be seen in a letter of his, very briefly expressed, in which, replying to a request of the Bishop of La Concepcion in Hispaniola, that more negroes should be imported, the King says, that there are already many negroes, and that it may occasion "inconvenience" (a thoroughly official phrase) if more male negroes should be introduced into the island.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PETER MARTYR, speaking of the King in the year 1513, says, "There is not the same appearance of face, not the same attention in listening, and not the same good-nature."—*Epist.* 529.

<sup>2</sup> "(Whereas you ask in order) more quickly to finish the church to be allowed to import ten slaves, and you say that you have tried negro slaves and would find it to the purpose to have more;—As for men, *No*, since there are already many and it might cause inconvenience."—EL REY *á* DON PEDRO SUAREZ DE DEZA, *Obispo de la Concepcion*, Valladolid, 27 de Setiembre 1514. *Coleccion de MUÑOZ*, MS., vol. 90.

## CHAPTER II

### LAS CASAS SEES THE CARDINAL XIMENES—THE ADMINISTRATION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS BY THE CARDINAL—APPOINTMENT OF THE JERONIMITES

AT the time of Ferdinand's death, his daughter Juana, the occupant of the throne of Castille (for the late king had been but regent), and the immediate heiress of that of Aragon, was insane; and her eldest son, Charles the Fifth, was but in his sixteenth year. Ferdinand, therefore, nominated by Will a regent to the kingdom, choosing the celebrated Cardinal Ximenes for that office. The king, when discussing on his death-bed the question of the regency, is said to have expressed himself thus: "If we could make a man for the occasion, I should wish for a more tractable one than Ximenes; for to deal with the ways of men every day degenerating, after the rigorous old fashion which Ximenes holds by, is wont to create difficulties in the state." But the King added, that the integrity and justness of Ximenes were qualities of the first order; and then, again, that he had no connexions among the great nobles, and no private friendships which he would give way to: moreover, mindful of the benefits he had received from Ferdinand and Isabella, he had been very intent upon their affairs; and the King concluded by saying, "Ximenes has shown constant and clear examples that he is of our mint, if I may so express myself."<sup>1</sup>

As there is good reason to think that Ferdinand had no especial liking for the Cardinal, the King's choice does both of them the more credit. And, indeed, of all the public men of those times in that kingdom, there was not one to be compared with Ximenes, especially in the faculty for government. There was now, then, some

<sup>1</sup> GOMEZIUS, *de rebus gestis Ximenii*, p. 126, folio, Francofurti.

hope that, should he turn his attention to Indian affairs, something distinct and forcible would be done in them.

Adrian of Utrecht, the Dean of Louvain, who had been Charles the Fifth's tutor, and who, in the latter days of Ferdinand, had been sent to Spain to watch over the Prince's interests, produced powers from the young Prince, nominating him (Adrian) to the government. Ximenes would not admit the validity of these powers, it being contended on his side that the Regency of Castille had been left by Isabella's Will to Ferdinand until Charles should be twenty years of age, and consequently that any act done by Charles during Ferdinand's life was invalid. On the other side it was argued that a regent could not create by will a regency. Finally, it was agreed that the question should be referred to Charles himself for decision; and that, meanwhile, Ximenes and Adrian should govern jointly. Afterwards there came a letter from Charles, confirming the nomination made by Ferdinand's Will of Ximenes, or rather the recommendation given, for it appears not to have amounted to more than that, and putting Adrian into communication with Ximenes, still calling the former Ambassador.

Adrian was a quiet, scholastic, just man with good purposes, very averse to much business. He could not have had any preponderating influence in affairs, and is said to have sent a complaint to Flanders, of the way in which Ximenes took all the government upon himself. Afterwards, the Flemish ministers of Charles sent over Monsieur de Laxao, a great wit and one of Charles's household, and also, at a subsequent period, another Fleming, to act in concert with the Cardinal, who received them courteously, but did not admit them to much authority. One day, when they must have been in a daring mood, they resolved to exercise some power independently of the Cardinal Governor, and affix their names first to some document, leaving Ximenes to add his. The Cardinal sent for the clerk who drew up the document, tore it up, bade him write out another, and it is said that thenceforward the Cardinal did not trouble his so-called colleagues for their signatures. I have little doubt that this was not mere arrogance, but that

he acted strictly within the limits of his power. And, indeed, a regency is sufficiently weak of itself, without being cumbered with unwelcome colleagues of dubious powers and unfriendly intentions. Moreover, the Cardinal had quite enough to contend against from his own countrymen. Of the high-handed way in which he managed them, there is the well-known story of his reply to certain Spanish grandees who wished to be informed of the grounds of his authority, whereupon he showed them the documents upon which it rested, namely, the Will of Ferdinand and the written approbation of Charles: then, leading them to a window, he requested them to look out on a large body of troops with a park of artillery, which he suggested to them were the ultimate reasoning of princes.

There is another story of him not so often mentioned, but which is very significant. The Duke del Infantado, being highly incensed against Ximenes, sent a priest of his ducal household with a most insulting message to the Cardinal, reproaching him, amongst other things, with his low origin. The priest, after kneeling down and begging the Cardinal's pardon for what he was about to say, said it. His Eminence asked the priest if he had anything more to observe. He replied, "No"; on which the Cardinal made this answer, "Return to your master, whom you will find already regretting his insolent and foolish message." And so it proved to be.

Having now obtained some little insight into the Cardinal Governor's general character and mode of proceeding, we come to those transactions of his which more immediately concern the purpose of this history.

Ximenes had not been an uninterested spectator of the policy of the Catholic Monarchs with regard to their American possessions; and he had urged them to send, which they did, ecclesiastics to the Indies, for the purpose of converting the natives. With an important diocese to manage, and with many other matters requiring his attention, the Cardinal had not particularly devoted his care to Indian affairs, and, as far as we know, had not been invited to do so. Now, however, as pertaining to the kingdom of Castille, and thus coming under his charge, the West

Indies were sure to meet with due care from this great statesman, and it was not long before their affairs were brought under his immediate notice.

Las Casas, as may be recollected, was at Seville, awaiting King Ferdinand's arrival, when the news came of his death, upon which the Clerigo prepared to go to Flanders, to produce what impression he could upon the new King; but, previously to taking this step, he went to Madrid, to lay his statement of the wrongs of the Indians before the Cardinal Governor and the Ambassador. He resolved to let them know of his intended journey, and to tell them that if they could remedy the evils he complained of, he would stay with them; if not, he would go on to Flanders.

He drew up his statement in Latin, and began by laying it before Adrian. That good man was horrified at what he read; and without delay he went into the apartment of the Cardinal (for the two great men were lodged in the same building), to ask him if such things could be. The result of the conference was, that Las Casas was informed by Ximenes that he need not proceed to Flanders, but that a remedy for the evils he spoke of should be found there, at Madrid.

The associates whom the Cardinal took into council, to hear what Las Casas had to tell of Indian affairs, were the Ambassador Adrian, the Licentiate Zapata, Dr. Caravajal, Dr. Palacios Rubios, and the Bishop of Avila. These important personages summoned the Clerigo many times before them, and heard what he had to say. In the course of these hearings a curious circumstance took place, which is well worth recording. During one of these juntas the Cardinal ordered that the laws of Burgos (the last laws made touching the Indians) should be read. It is a slight circumstance, but serves to give some indication of the excellence of the Cardinal as a man of business and a member of a council, that he should wish to know exactly where the matter was, and what they were to start from. The Clerk of the Junta, an old retainer of Conchillos, when he came to the law about giving a pound of meat to the Indians on Sundays and feastdays, probably thinking that this in some way touched himself or his friends, read it

wrongly. Las Casas, who knew the laws almost by heart, at once exclaimed, "The law does not say that." The Cardinal bade the clerk read it again. He gave the same reading. Las Casas said again, "That law says no such thing." The Cardinal, annoyed at these interruptions, exclaimed, "Be silent, or look to what you say." But Las Casas was not to be silenced by fear, when he knew himself to be in the right. "Your Lordship may order my head to be cut off," he exclaimed, "if what the clerk reads is what the law says." Some members of the Council took the papers from the clerk's hands, and found that Las Casas was right. "You may imagine," he adds, "that that clerk (whose name, for his honour's sake, I will not mention) wished that he had not been born, so that he might not have met with the confusion of face he then met with." Las Casas concludes by remarking, "that the Clerigo lost nothing of the regard which the Cardinal had for him, and the credit which he gave to him."

The result of these meetings was, that the Cardinal appointed Las Casas and Dr. Palacios Rubios, who had all along shown great interest in favour of the Indians, to draw up a plan for securing their liberty and arranging their government. At the request of Las Casas, Antonio Montesino was afterwards added to this committee. Their way of proceeding was as follows. Las Casas, as the more experienced in the matter, made the rough draught of any proposition, which he then showed to Antonio Montesino, who generally approved it, then to the doctor, who did the same, except that he perhaps added to it, and put it in official language. It was then taken to the Cardinal and the Ambassador; and council held upon it.

The thing to be done and the mode of doing it, were thus after much labour arrived at: the legislation was accordingly complete. And now the persons who were to have the great charge of administering the law, had to be sought out. The Cardinal bade Las Casas find these persons; but the Clerigo, from his absence for so long a time from Castille, did not know fit persons, and begged to give the commission back into the Cardinal's hands, presenting at the same time a memorial in which

he stated what in his opinion were the qualifications for the office in question. The Cardinal, smiling, observed to Las Casas, "Well, Father, we have some good persons."

The Cardinal resolved to look for his men amongst the Jeronimite monks, on account of their not being mixed up with the contention that had already taken place between the Franciscans and Dominicans touching the fitness of the Indians for freedom. Ximenes, accordingly, wrote to that effect to the General of the Order,<sup>1</sup> who called a chapter; when twelve of the brethren were named; and a deputation of four priors was sent to the Cardinal to inform him of the nomination.

Las Casas, who was naturally anxious about the answer of the Jeronimites, went one Sunday morning to hear mass at their convent near to Madrid. There he found a venerable man praying in the cloister: upon asking him whether there was any reply to the Cardinal's missive, the old man told him, that he was one of the priors who had brought an answer, that they arrived last night, and that the Cardinal, having been made aware of their arrival, was to come to the convent that day.

Accordingly, in the course of the day, the Cardinal and Adrian came with a cavalcade of courtiers to the convent. The monks received the Junta in the sacristy, the main body of the courtiers remaining outside in the choir; amongst them, doubtless to his no small chagrin, the Bishop of Burgos, long accustomed to direct Indian affairs, but now of no authority in them.

The Cardinal, after thanking the Order for the tenor of their reply, and magnifying the work in hand, desired Las Casas to be called for, who, with great delight, walked through the assembled courtiers, much regarded by them, but most of all, as he conjectures, by the Bishop of Burgos.

Entering the sacristy, Las Casas knelt down before

<sup>1</sup> [On 8th July 1516. The chapter pointed out that the Jeronimites knew little of Indian matters, and that, if churchmen were chosen, those already out there would do better than new-comers. Probably the Cardinal held an entirely opposite view for those same reasons.]



the Cardinal, who told him to thank God that the desires which God had given him were in the way of being accomplished. The Cardinal then informed him that the priors had brought twelve names of persons who might be chosen for the work, but that three would suffice. His Eminence added, that this night Las Casas should have letters of credit to the General of the Jeronimites and money for his journey, and that he was to go and confer with that Prelate about the choice of the three, informing the General of the requisite qualities for the office in question. Las Casas was then to bring to court the first Jeronimite of the chosen three whom he should find ready to accompany him. The despatches should thereupon be prepared, after which he might at once set off with them<sup>1</sup> for Seville.

We may observe throughout that nothing lingers in the Cardinal's hands. Commonplace statesmen live by delay, believe in it, hope in it, pray to it: but his Eminence worked as a man who knew that the night was coming, "in which no man can work."

Las Casas, almost in tears with joy, poured out his thanks and blessings on the Cardinal, and concluded by saying, that the money was not necessary, for that he had enough to sustain him in this business. The Cardinal smiled and said, "Go to, Father, I am richer than you are." (*Andá, Padre, que yo soy mas rico que vos.*) And then Las Casas went out, "The Cardinal saying many favourable things of some one who shall be nameless."<sup>2</sup>

The Clerigo received his letters, conferred with the General of the Order of St Jerome, and three brethren were chosen. Their names were Luis de Figueroa, Prior of La Mejorada, Alonso de Santo Domingo, Prior of the Convent of Ortega, and Bernardino Manzanedo.

Las Casas brought with him Bernardino Manzanedo to Madrid, the other two joined him there; and they all lived with him at his inn. Afterwards, however, they went to a hospital of their own Order in that city. While staying there, they were waylaid, so to

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 290.

speak, by the agents for the Spanish colonists, who told them all manner of things against the Indians, and spoke ill of Las Casas; and, in the end, succeeded, as he thinks, in prejudicing the minds of the Fathers to that extent, that even before they set out, Las Casas and Dr. Palacios Rubios began to think that no good would come of this mission, which promised at the first so well.

The preparations, however, for their departure went on; and their orders and instructions were made ready. The first order was a *Cédula* to the effect, that on their arrival at St. Domingo, they should take away all the Indians belonging to members of the Council, or to any other absentees. The second was, that they should also deprive the judges and officers in the Indies of their Indians. The third was, that they should hold a court of impeachment upon all the judges and other officers in the colony, "who had lived, as the saying is, 'as Moors without a king.'"

Then came the main body of the instructions, which commences with a preamble to the following effect. The first thing the Jeronimite Fathers are to do, on arriving in the Indies, is to call the principal colonists together, and to tell them that the cause of their coming is the report of the ill-treatment of the Indians: that as their Highnesses, the Cardinal and the Ambassador, wish to know the truth of these matters, they have sent these Fathers, to whom the colonists are to tell what they know, of the past and present state of things. They are to be made to understand that all this is done for their good and preservation, and that if by voluntary consent any good remedy can be suggested, by which God and their Highnesses may be served, it should be taken; wherefore, let them talk the matter over and tell the Fathers what conclusion they have agreed upon by common consent.

Then the Fathers are to go to the principal caciques and to tell them that their Highnesses, the Cardinal and the Ambassador, have heard of the oppressions and injuries which they and their people have suffered in times past; and, as their Highnesses wish so to remedy

these evils, that thenceforward the caciques and their Indians may be well treated, since they are Christians, free and capable of governing themselves (*súbditos de sus almas*), their Highnesses have sent the said Fathers to search out the truth, to chastise the past wrong-doing, and to provide security for the future. Then the caciques, as well as the colonists, are to talk the matter over, and to see whether they can suggest any good way in which both they and the colonists may be benefited. The address to the Indians is to conclude with an assurance "that the will of their Highnesses, the Cardinal and the Ambassador is, that the Indians should be treated as Christians and freemen, and that such is the principal cause of their ordering the Fathers to go to those parts."

And here it is well to put on record, as Las Casas does at this juncture, an account of the part which Ximenes himself took in this great matter of the freedom of the Indians. The Clerigo mentions that as he saw the tyranny of the Spaniards so deeply rooted, he did not dare to go about speaking of the Indians as free men, until one day, talking to the Cardinal of the evils which the Indians endured, the Clerigo remarked, "With what justice can these things be done, whether the Indians are free or not?" to which Ximenes replied with vehemence, "With no justice: what, are they not free? who doubts about their being free?" From that time forward the Clerigo went about saying openly in every place, that the Indians were free men. On this ground Ximenes may fairly be put forward as one of the earliest champions of freedom, though at the same time it must in truth be said that the credit which has been given him<sup>1</sup> for protesting

<sup>1</sup> ROBERTSON'S *America*, i, p. 253 :—"Cardinal Ximenes, however, when solicited to encourage this commerce, peremptorily rejected the proposition, because he perceived the iniquity of reducing one race of men to slavery, while he was consulting about the means of restoring liberty to another."

The authority quoted by Robertson for this fact gives quite a different reason for the objection of Ximenes, viz., that the licences above mentioned were a loss to the revenue. [Don J. A. Saco also takes the view that Ximenes was no opponent of negro slavery, but only of the indiscriminate grant of licences.]

against negro slavery, is quite gratuitous. The greedy courtiers of Charles the Fifth persuaded that young Monarch, while he was in Flanders, to grant licences for the importation of negroes to the West Indies, to the number of four hundred or more.<sup>1</sup> When Ximenes heard of this, he protested against it, on the ground that the negroes were a warlike race, and that they would excite a servile war,<sup>2</sup> a prediction which was soon verified by the result.

Leaving the question of what Ximenes might have

<sup>1</sup> Such are the Spanish accounts. But, in a life, or rather perhaps a eulogy, which has been written of Chièvres, it appears as if he himself had bought six hundred negroes, and caused them to be sent to America; and that when Ximenes opposed this on the ground of danger from the warlike character of the negroes, Chièvres imagined that this opposition arose from national jealousy, persevered in his resolution, and caused the King to uphold him. "Chièvres caused six hundred to be bought and sent to America, where the Spaniards who lived in that new part of the world were informed of the advantage they would have in making use of those black slaves seeing that they were to be had so cheaply. But Cardinal Ximenes found a great deal to be said against it; and pretended that if the Spaniards by depriving themselves of the use of Guinea slaves suffered injury from insufficient labour, they had, to make amends for that, the satisfaction of knowing that the West Indians whom they brought into their houses would never wrong them by conspiring and rising against them. On the other hand the negroes, who were as malicious as they were strong, would no sooner perceive themselves to be more numerous in the new world than the Spaniards than they would lay their heads together to put on their masters the chains they now carried. Ayala was sent back to the Court of Brussels to exaggerate that inconvenience, but Chièvres was not satisfied with it. He did not think that was the cause of Ximenes' action, and attributed a deeper motive to him. He imputed it to the jealousy of the Spaniards for the Indies which went so far as not to suffer any other nation but themselves to set foot there for fear they might take a fancy to share its riches. . . . The Catholic King, notwithstanding the remonstrance of Ximenes, sent to Española the negroes Chièvres had caused to be bought; but five years later he had occasion to repent it because the negroes revolted."—*La pratique de l'Éducation des Princes, ou Histoire de Guillaume de Croy, surnommé le Sage, Seigneur de Chièvres, Gouverneur de Charles D'Autriche qui fut Empereur Cinquième du Nom.* PAR MON<sup>R</sup> VARILLAS. Lib. 4, pp. 242, 243. Amsterdam, 1684.

<sup>2</sup> "For these blacks are apt in the art of war, nor altogether wanting intelligence for the most part, to fight excellently. Therefore he thought it wrong to send them to serve beyond the ocean . . . who against the Spanish rule might stir up a servile war."—GOMEZIUS, *De rebus gestis Ximenii*, lib. 6, p. 185.

thought, or done, for the freedom of another race, it remains to be seen, what plan he and his Junta for Indian affairs did resolve upon for placing the Indians in a way to live like free men. The instructions which were given to the Jeronimite Fathers may thus be summed up.

They were ordered to visit every island, to ascertain the number of Indians, and to find out how they had been used, putting down in writing their information on this head.

They were to take note of the nature of the land, for the purpose of forming settlements near to mines, where, if possible, there should be rivers and good soil for farms.

These settlements were to consist of about three hundred persons, with the requisite number of houses, a church, a public square, where the Cacique's house should be placed, and a hospital for purposes which will hereafter be named.

The settlements were to be formed, as much as possible, in those places which the Indians preferred: lands were to be apportioned to each settlement, every individual Indian receiving a certain plot of land, and the Cacique four times as much as any other, there being also common land left for pasture.

These settlements were to be peopled by the neighbouring Indians, who, it was to be expected, would come with better will than others. If there were not a sufficient number of Indians in the vicinity living under one Cacique, then two or three Caciques and their people were to be united to form the settlement, each Cacique ruling over his own people, and there being one superior Cacique, who, together with the Ecclesiastic (*religioso ó clérigo*), who might be stationed there, and with a civil officer, called an Administrator, should take charge of the government of the settlement.

The Cacique was, with the consent of the Ecclesiastic, to have the power of stripes over his people, but no more. Any crime demanding higher punishment was to be dealt with in the ordinary course of justice. The subordinate officers of the settlement were to be appointed conjointly

by the Cacique, the Clerigo, and the Administrator. A Spaniard might marry a cacique's daughter, and so succeed to a caciquedom, which was rather to be encouraged.

One Administrator was to be appointed to two or three settlements; but he was not to live within the precincts of any one of them, for fear his attendants, who might be Spaniards, and who were allowed to bear arms, should oppress the Indians, who were not allowed to bear arms. He was to be a married man and a colonist. His salary was to be paid partly by the treasury and partly by the settlement he administered. His business was to confer with the Cacique and the Clerigo, and to see that the Indians lived in policy, and that they worked—but not excessively. He was to administer justice; he was to see that the Indians did not gamble away, or part foolishly with, their mining tools and means of subsistence; he was to prevent polygamy: and, in fine, he was to civilize and to judge the Indians committed to his charge.

Then came instructions for the religious observances in these settlements.

Education was to be provided for in the following manner. A sacristan was to be appointed, an Indian, if one competent to fill the place could be found: he was to serve in the church, and to teach the children up to nine years of age to read and write, especially the children of the Caciques and principal Indians; and he was to show them how to speak Spanish, and also to endeavour to make the grown-up people speak Spanish as much as possible.

Mention has before been made of a hospital: this hospital was to be in the middle of the village, and was to be rather what we should call a poorhouse than a hospital; for not only the sick, but the old who could not work, and the orphans, were to be placed in it. Lands were to be set apart for the hospital.

The instructions then entered upon the difficult question of labour. There would be some settlements which, from their locality, would have nothing to do with mining operations: these were to tend herbs and cultivate cotton,

and to pay a tribute to the King, bearing a just proportion to what the others, which worked mines, would have to pay. With regard to the settlements near mines, the following regulations were to be adopted. The third part of the men between twenty and fifty years of age were to work at the mines, setting off at sunrise and working till dinner time; then they were to have three hours' recreation, and afterwards to resume their work, continuing until sunset. This company (gang they would now be called) was to work in the above manner for two months consecutively, and then to be relieved by another company. The period of two months might be varied according to the pleasure of the Cacique. The women were not to work at the mines unless they desired to do so. The overseers of the workmen were to be Indians. After having served in the mines their appointed time, the Indians were to work at their own allotments, under the inspection of the Cacique and the Clerigo, or of the Administrator. The Cacique was to have fifteen days' work gratis every year from each Indian upon his farm; and the women and children were to look after his plantations.

Then came the arrangements about the pasturage of the land. Each settlement was, if possible, to be provided with ten or twelve mares, fifty cows, and six or seven hundred pigs. These cattle and pigs were to be in the hands of the Cacique, to be looked after by the community, in order to sustain them in common, until they should be able and accustomed to take care of these animals for themselves individually. This last provision is a very important one, as it left room for the development of the individuals composing the community.

The wives of those men who were working at the mines were to make bread for them from the produce of their own allotments, and this was to be sent to them on the mares, with maize and red pepper, and whatever was necessary. Cattle also were to be taken to the mines, to feed the workmen there; and a dispensation was to be procured to allow them to eat meat some days in Lent, as fish was difficult to be got.

Lastly, came the regulations about the gold obtained at the mines. All the gold obtained each day was to be given to the *Nitayno* (a native word signifying an officer inferior to the Cacique), and when melting-time came, say every two months, the *Nitayno*, the Cacique, and the Administrator should take the gold to be melted. The proceeds were to be divided into three parts, one for the King, and the remaining two for the Cacique and the Indians.

Out of these two remaining parts the stock that had been furnished to the settlement and all the common expenses of the settlement should be paid for. What then remained was to be divided equally amongst the heads of families, except that the Cacique was to have six shares, and the *Nitayno* two shares. Out of each Indian's share tools were to be bought, which should be his own, and for which he should be accountable.

With what gold might still remain to any Indian, the Cacique, in conjunction with the Ecclesiastic or the Administrator, should buy fowls for him to keep, linen, and any furniture that might be necessary for his cottage.

If any remained after this, it was to be entrusted to an upright person, who was to be accountable to the Indian for it—to be, in short, a sort of banker to him. Everything was to be certified by writing, and a register kept of the tools and other things bought for the Indians.

A hundred Spaniards were to be appointed as pioneers to discover mines; they were to be paid partly by the King, and partly by these communities of Indians.

It will naturally occur to any one reading the above instructions, to ask what was to become of the Spanish colonists, when their Indians were mostly taken from them and formed into these communities? But remedies were provided for the Spaniards as well as for the Indians. The Spaniards were to be paid for the land which would be required for the settlements; then they would have the offices of administrator and of the mine-discoverers, and also, if the Indians were taught trades, the Spaniards were to teach them. Moreover, they were to have a licence to get gold for themselves, married men paying



only a tenth to the crown, and single men a seventh. Then each Spaniard might have four or five slaves, being permitted to take slaves from amongst the Caribs. Many of the Spaniards were indebted to the crown: they were not to be imprisoned on account of these debts, and might pass to the continent of America; and, if they did go there, they were to receive certain gratifications, I suppose in stores or money.

In reading the foregoing instructions for these little Indian commonwealths, we cannot but be impressed with the thoughtfulness and kindness which pervade the general body of them. Perhaps there is an attempt at too much management; but, under wise and prudent administrators, this, if an error, would have been easily remedied. In considering the compensations for the Spanish colonists, there are two things which seem to me very injudicious. The first is, the encouragement given to the peopling of the *Tierra-firme*, as they were wont to call it, which all the princes and statesmen of that time were in sad haste to accomplish, before any one colony in the West Indies had been well constituted; whereas they might have been quite sure that the love of novelty, the exaggeration of rumour, and the wild hopes and fancies about unknown lands, would effect that purpose rapidly enough. And the aim of the Home Government ought, I think, to have been to concentrate, and not to scatter, their colonists.

Then the permission to capture Caribs was sure to lead to the greatest abuse, as it had already done.

Las Casas objects to the compulsory<sup>1</sup> working at the mines, and to the payment to be demanded from the

<sup>1</sup> The words of Las Casas on the subject, though somewhat unpractical, are very remarkable for the noble spirit they indicate. "The thought that by main force a third part had always to go to the mines was alone quite sufficient to overwhelm them. It is plain that they have concerned themselves with domestic and farm work and the rest for nothing, in order that they might commence to breathe freely, and know what sort of thing was LIBERTAD (*sic* in MS.), either at the cost of the King, or of the Spaniards who, with so much peril to their lives, have made use of them."—LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lkv, p. 309.

Indians for whatever cattle and implements were to be furnished them. He is also averse to the provision for the capture of the Caribs, and declares that all these things were inserted contrary to his wishes. I hardly see how, without prophetic vision, any body of statesmen of that time, who had not themselves been in the Indies, could have been wise and foreseeing enough to leave the Indians alone in their settlements, not compelling them to go to the mines, but looking forward to the time when they would become civilized and taxable communities.<sup>1</sup>

What was wrong, however, in these provisions, might have been modified: and Las Casas would have had less reason to be dissatisfied, if the above had been the only instructions which the Jeronimite Fathers were to carry out with them. But, as there were some persons in the Junta upon Indian affairs, who held that the Indians would not live in polity, another so-called remedy was provided, in case the Fathers should conclude that the Indians were still to remain in *repartimiento*. This remedy consisted in some modification of the Laws of Burgos. In addition to these modifications, the Cardinal himself suggested two things: first, that there should be a person to represent the Indians at court; and, secondly, that labourers should be sent out to the Indies from Castille. But these two propositions remained unacted upon at that time. It is very remarkable—and an excellent trait in Las Casas, his mentioning the circumstance—that the Cardinal was ready to provide more remedies than those already named, for the evils endured by the Indians; but that he himself, Las Casas, went about the matter with some timidity (*paso á paso, y como acobardado*), both from not having thought more on the subject, and also from knowing the tyranny of the Spaniards to be so deeply rooted.

The despatches for the Jeronimite Fathers being now concluded, other matters connected with this great pro-

<sup>1</sup> [However, the plan of leaving the Indians to themselves, subject merely to the payment of a capitation tax to the crown, was several times under consideration, and was strongly recommended by some reformers. The argument invariably urged against it, which prevented any possibility of its adoption, was that the Indians had no real inclination to Christianity, and, when left to themselves, soon relapsed into heathen beliefs.]

posed reform were brought to a close. Las Casas was by a *Cédula* formally appointed to advise and inform the Jeronimite Fathers,<sup>1</sup> to be in correspondence with the government, and generally to take such steps in the matter as might be for the service of God and their Highnesses. All authorities were to abet him in the same. He was also named "Protector of the Indians," with a salary of a hundred *pesos* of gold, which he himself observes, "was then not little, as that hell of Peru" (*infierno del Peru*) "had not been discovered, which, with its multitude of *quintals* of gold, has impoverished and destroyed Spain."<sup>2</sup> These are remarkable words for that time.

It now only remained, that the legal part of the reform contemplated by Ximenes, should be provided for. To ensure this, the Cardinal chose a lawyer of repute named Zuazo, giving him very large powers. He was to take a *residencia* of all the Judges in the Indies, and what was of more importance, his decisions were not to be appealed against. The Licentiate Zapata and Dr. Caravajal called these powers exorbitant (the reader will recollect, that Albuquerque, the first *repartidor*, was a cousin of Zapata's), and they refused to give their signature, which was necessary, to the instructions.<sup>3</sup> This led to much delay. Zuazo

<sup>1</sup> [By a *Cédula* of 17th September 1516.]

<sup>2</sup> [Mr U. R. Burke (*Hist. of Spain*, ii, p. 286) gives the following values for Spanish coins of the reign of the Catholic Kings: the *Excelente* about 20 francs; the *Medio-Excelente*, *Castellano*, *Dobla Morisca*, and *Enrique*, about 10 francs each; the *Ducat*, *Cruzado*, *Dobla de la Banda*, *Excelente de Granada*, *Florin of Florence*, and *Salute*, at about six shillings each; the *Crown*, or *Corona*, about 5s. 6d., the *Florin of Aragon* at 4s. 2d., and the silver *real* at fivepence. Sir Arthur Helps values the *peso* at 4s. 8½d.]

<sup>3</sup> This has given occasion to Robertson to write the following passage, which has no foundation. "To vest such extraordinary powers, as might at once overturn the system of government established in the New World, in four persons, who, from their humble condition in life, were little entitled to possess this high authority, appeared to Zapata, and other ministers of the late King, a measure so wild and dangerous, that they refused to issue the despatches necessary for carrying it into execution."

The authority he refers to, expressly contradicts him. Zapata there says "there ought not to be so much entrusted to one man alone." But indeed, the whole error is based on a misapprehension of the age the historian was writing about. These Jeronimites were not, necessarily, persons of "humble condition," or of small authority, in those days. Oviedo speaks of them in these terms,— "Three ecclesiastics of the

threatened to return to Valladolid, saying, if he once returned to his college, no one should get him out of it again. Upon this Las Casas hurried off to the Cardinal, who supposed that Zuazo had already gone upon his mission, when the Clerigo informed his Eminence of the delay and the cause of it. The Cardinal, who, as Las Casas then observes, was not a man to be played with (*ninguno con él se burlaba*), sent for the Licentiate Zapata and Dr. Caravajal, and bade them in his presence sign all the provisions of the powers for Zuazo: which they did, putting, however, a certain private mark to their signatures, which was to denote what they intended afterwards to say, namely, that the Cardinal had forced them to sign.

At last, all was ready for these seeds of well-devised legislation to be taken out and sown in the Indies. Las Casas went to take leave of Ximenes and to kiss hands. He could not on this occasion refrain from uttering his mind to the Cardinal, telling him that the Jeronimite Fathers would do no good thing, and informing him of their interviews with the agents from the colonies. It moves our pity to think, that the sick old man, wearied enough with rapacious Flemish courtiers and untameable Spanish grandees, should now be told, after he had given so much time and attention to this business of the Indies, that the mission would do no good. Well may Las Casas add, that the Cardinal seemed struck with alarm; and that, after a short time, he said, "Whom then can we trust? You are going there, be watchful for all."<sup>1</sup> Upon this, after receiving the Cardinal's benediction, Las Casas left for Seville.

The Jeronimite Fathers and the Clerigo then commenced their voyage, in different vessels, however, for probably being somewhat tired of his discourses, and perhaps not wishing to alarm the colonists more than could be helped by being seen in such close contact with one so odious to them as Las Casas, the Fathers had

Order of St. Jerome, persons of great merit, learned, and of austere life."—*Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 4, cap. 2.

<sup>1</sup> LAS CASAS, *Hist. de las Indias*, lxxv, p. 319.

contrived on some pretext to prevent his going with them, though he much wished it. And when they arrived at St. Domingo,<sup>1</sup> they seemed inclined there, too, to take a separate course from what he thought right. He speaks of them as gained over by the shrewd official men they fell amongst, such as the Treasurer Pasamonte.<sup>2</sup> In discourse with Las Casas, the Fathers began, he says, to gild over and excuse the inhumanity of the colonists; and what was a shameful defect in their mode of proceeding, according to his view of the case, they did not put in execution the charge they had received, to take away the Indians from the Spanish Judges and men in office, though they deprived the absentees of their Indians.

The Fathers asked the opinion of the official persons and also of the Franciscans and Dominicans touching the liberty of the Indians. It was very clear beforehand what the answers would be. The official persons and the Franciscans pronounced against the Indians, and the Dominicans in their favour.

In three months' time Zuazo arrived. Las Casas now resolved on a bold, perhaps we may say, a violent step, though if we had been eye-witnesses of the cruelties that he had seen, our indignation, like his, might not always have been amenable to prudence. He resolved, himself, to impeach the Judges.<sup>3</sup> To use his own phrase, he brought against them a tremendous accusation (*púsoles una terrible acusacion*), both in respect to their conduct in bringing Indians from the Lucayan

<sup>1</sup> [On 20th December 1516.]

<sup>2</sup> [On 17th July 1517 Miguel de Pasamonte wrote to the Cardinal that the Jeronimites "examine everything very prudently like wise and conscientious men; I hope that their coming to these parts will prove very serviceable to God and their Highnesses, and that your Reverend Lordship will receive much contentment from having sent such persons here."]

<sup>3</sup> The "Jueces de apelacion." [They were nominated by ordinance of 5th October 1511, in consequence of the delay and expense experienced by those who were dissatisfied with local law and appealed home. Eventually there were three supreme courts, or "*Royal*" *Audiencias*, for the Indies, and after the formation of the Council of the Indies appeal from them to that body was possible in the last resort but was not encouraged or made at all easy.]

islands, and also in reference to the infamous proceedings connected with that incident in Cumaná, before mentioned, whereby the two poor Dominicans, Francisco de Córdova and Juan Garces were left to be murdered by the natives. Certainly, if any charges were to be made against these Judges, it must be admitted that the subjects of accusation were well chosen.

The Jeronimite Fathers were much grieved at this bold step being taken by Las Casas. They evidently wished to manage things quietly; and were proceeding mainly with the second class of remedies for the Indians, giving them in *repartimiento* to such of the colonists as they thought well of, and publishing the orders for ameliorating the condition of the subject people.<sup>1</sup> The Fathers seem on the whole to have made great efforts to do good, which must not pass without due recognition. I think with Las Casas, that if they had ventured to adopt the scheme, which he, Dr. Palacios Rubios, and Antonio Montesino had planned, it would have been better; and there is no doubt, that while Ximenes lived, they would have had a sufficiently powerful protector, to enable them to carry out such a measure. But, not resolving upon such a bold undertaking, which few men indeed would have had courage for, and leaving many of the colonists (I suppose most of them) in possession of their Indians, they still made great efforts to carry out the second class of measures for the relief of the Indians and the benefit of the colony. They looked well after the King's farms, they paid great attention to the cultivation of sugar, and they impressed the Indians with such an opinion of their power and willingness to protect them, that the Indians were emboldened to come to the Fathers and to make complaints of any injuries suffered by them.

Acting in the same spirit (and it shows the largeness of the powers with which the Jeronimite Fathers were invested), they wrote to Pedrarias, of whose proceedings they seem to have been made well aware,<sup>2</sup> ordering him to make no more expeditions, and to send an account of

<sup>1</sup> HERRERA, dec. 2, lib. 2, cap. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Probably by Francisco de San Roman. See *ante*, book vi, chap. ii.

the gold and slaves which had been the fruit of his past enterprizes. They even went much further, and desired that Pedrarias, taking into council the Bishop of Darien and some learned men, theologians and jurists, should examine whether those Indians whom his captains had brought back, were justly made slaves; and if not, that they should be restored. These same learned men were also to make it a subject of enquiry whether these entries into the country were lawful. Las Casas may complain of the Jeronimites, but I have no doubt they were more vigorous, and aimed at better purposes than almost any mere official persons would have done: and their conduct illustrates to my mind, what I have long thought about government, that there are occasions when those do best in it who are not strictly bred up for it, and who are not, therefore, likely to have the vigour and force of their natures encrusted with routine and deadened by a slavish belief in the incomplete traditions of the past.

Finally, and probably after Las Casas had returned to Spain, the Jeronimite Fathers formed some of the Indians into settlements consisting of four or five hundred; which might have thriven very well, for aught that is told us to the contrary, but that at that period, or a little before, the smallpox broke out with much virulence, and carried off many of the natives. The destruction caused by this malady has been much exaggerated, and it has been put down as one of the great causes of the depopulation of the West Indies; but in reality, the utmost number of persons who were collected together in these settlements, were not more than between eleven and twelve hundred, while hundreds of thousands had long ere this been destroyed by other causes.

Such measured proceedings as the Jeronimite Fathers at first adopted, did not accord with the temperament of Las Casas; neither were they such remedies as the fearful nature of the disease demanded. Moreover, in addition to his disapproval of their measures, he distrusted the men themselves. He states that they had relations whom they wished to benefit in the island of Hispaniola, but as they feared him too much to do so there, they

recommended these relations to Diego Velazquez, the Governor of Cuba; and Las Casas observed, that in a letter which he happened to see when they were about to close it, they signed themselves "Chaplains to Your Honour" (*Capellanes de Vuestra Merced*), a mode of describing themselves which seemed to him conclusive of the position the Fathers were going to take up with regard to this Governor. The Protector of the Indians, therefore, resolved to return to Castille and to appeal against the Fathers: and in this resolve he was strengthened by the opinion of Zuazo and of Pedro de Córdova, who still continued to be the head of the Dominican Order in those parts.

The Fathers were much disconcerted when they heard of the intention of Las Casas to return to court, saying that he was a torch that would set everything in a flame, and they had thoughts of stopping him; but this was not within the scope of their powers. What they could do, and what they afterwards did, was to send one of their own body to court, to make representations on their behalf.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Clerigo left St. Domingo in May 1517, and in July reached Aranda on the Douro, where he found Cardinal Ximenes at the point of death. Las Casas seems to have been fated to appear to great personages a few days before their death. This time, though, whatever complaints he might have been able to make of the administration of Indian affairs, he had nothing to say which could wound the conscience of the dying statesman. The Clerigo's letters to Ximenes had, he says, been intercepted, and, in the little that passed between them then, the Protector of the Indians found the Cardinal ill-informed of what had occurred in Hispaniola.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Bernardino de Manzanedo.]

<sup>2</sup> [There are some letters extant from the Jeronimite Fathers to the Cardinal, and to Charles V., which may be fittingly abstracted here. The first, dated 20th January 1517, to the Cardinal commences with an urgent request that he "will be pleased to hear our letters read and not inform yourself of them by the accounts of others, because words so heard make less impression on a third person, and this we beg of your



It will be well to quit for a moment the bed of the dying Cardinal, to see what was the political state of the court and kingdom of Spain at this period. Ximenes had throughout his regency urged upon Charles the Fifth the necessity of coming forthwith to take possession of his

Reverend Lordship in consideration of our labours." After touching at San Juan de Puerto Rico, and leaving directions that the Indians were to be well treated, they arrived at San Domingo. Two days after their arrival they assembled the officials and read and enrolled their powers; the officials welcomed them, "and say that your Lordship was inspired by the Holy Ghost in sending us here," but there is some excitement caused by letters from Spain reporting that they have come out to free the Indians. They will write further about the Indians after fuller consideration, "up to now all we have done in the matter of the Indians is to take them away from owners residing in Castille . . . we have ordered that the miners shall be paid fixed wages and not a proportion of the gold obtained by their Indians, because we were informed that to make their pay greater they worked them mercilessly, and many died." On their arrival they found the Indians idle and restless, and the settlers suspicious, "there is much difference between hearing about this island and seeing what is going on." They explain that they have not deprived the magistrates and officials of their Indians "because we are informed that they were given as part of their salaries, and it appeared to us that we ought not to deprive them of the Indians without giving increased salaries until Your Rev. Lordship had been consulted on the matter. If it be decided that they are to give up the Indians, then Your Rev. Lordship should increase their salaries, considering the country, because we suspect that otherwise they will throw up their offices. As far as we know at present they are wise and discreet men and good servants to Their Highnesses." Noting that there are two posts to be filled in Cuba, they express a hope that the Cardinal will "order good men to be nominated, and not self-seekers, for such have been the ruin of this country," an expression of opinion which seems directly to contradict that of the preceding paragraph. They add that there is a great want of bishops and that some of the clergy lead irregular lives.

The next letter is of 22nd June 1517, but, from the references in it, there were several intervening ones now lost. They beg the Cardinal's attention to the question of the Indians, and that he will send out orders quickly. Everything is restless and unsettled, although "in this island, Española, the Indians are treated very well, or at least better than they ever were before." Since their arrival they have had two inspections of the mines and other places, carried out once by the official visitors and once by their own, and are now preparing another. They hope that if Ximenes receives accounts varying from theirs he will give no credit to such reports as coming either from people who do not know how to temper justice with mercy, or how to do things reasonably. The crying want of the country is Spanish settlers;

Spanish dominions. This had been delayed from time to time. At last Charles had set sail from Flanders, and being driven by a great storm, he landed unexpectedly at Villa Viciosa in the province of Asturias. The common people of that remote district, imagining they

everyone is in debt, and when they have cleared their accounts after taking their gold to the melting-house they are as poor as ever. Every article of ordinary necessity is very dear, therefore commerce should be stimulated by relaxing the restrictions strangling communication with the Indies. The emigration of agricultural labourers should be encouraged, but, above all, the importation of negroes should be allowed, experience showing the great necessity for them.

The next letter, of 18th January 1518, is addressed to Charles V. It commences by urging the importance of permitting the settlers of Española to send direct to Africa for negroes. That Charles may judge of the future from the present he "must know that when the Spaniards came to the island there were thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of Indians in it, and, to our sin, we (the Spaniards) have made such haste with them that at the time we arrived here, little more than a year ago, there remained so few as to resemble the remains left after the gathering of the fruit for the vintage. And these were so scattered all over the island, and so few in each place, and so subdivided among mines and farms and otherwise, that we found that it was in no way possible that they nor their successors could become good Christians; still less could they increase in number on account of being mostly men in one place and mostly women in another." On all these points they had consulted Ximenes, who directed them to consider the subject thoroughly. They have decided to send their colleague, Bernardino de Manzanedo, back to Spain to report and to receive orders; in the meantime, they propose to form settlements of Indians, each settlement to contain four or five hundred people, and to have a priest, and a married Spaniard to teach farming, etc. At first some of the Spaniards put difficulties in the way, but they have been convinced of the merits of the scheme. On 10th January 1519 they write to Charles V. that they have made thirty settlements and fitted them with agricultural implements and church necessities, "and that which has happened is that whereas they were to leave the mines last December to go to the *Pueblos*, it has pleased our Lord to send an epidemic of smallpox among them which still continues, and there have died, or are like to die up to the present time a third part of them." Unless negroes are sent it will be useless to expect any gold this year from Española.

De Manzanedo having returned to Spain, either for the reasons given by his colleagues, or, as Sir Arthur Helps says, to counteract Las Casas, did not rejoin his associates. On 18th February 1518 he addressed to Charles V., from Valladolid, a long and able paper dealing with the problems to be solved in the Indies. As for the natives:—"The ecclesiastics dwelling there, as well Franciscans as Dominicans,

beheld a French fleet, retired into the mountains; but when, from the royal ship were proclaimed the words "Spain, Spain, our Catholic King, our King"; casting down their arms, as some evil things which they had taken up unawares, they threw themselves on their knees, and raised their voices to the stars. Such is Peter Martyr's picturesque account in one of his letters of the landing of the young Spanish Monarch.

Meanwhile the Cardinal had moved from Aranda to Roa, a distance of about twenty miles. The state of his health may be seen from his mode of travelling. "His shoes, gloves, and sleeves were covered with precious skins which they called *zebellines*; he was also well wrapped in woollen garments when he entered his litter. There was at his feet a silver chafing dish with juniper ashes, and in his hands he carried a silver globe with hot iron inside."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the courtiers and official persons set off at once to see the new King, without asking the leave of Ximenes, who complained of this conduct on their part. Charles rebuked them severely by letter, and commanded them to return. This does not appear like disrespect on Charles's part. But he has been accused, not merely of disrespect, but of the grossest ingratitude, towards the Cardinal. That the Flemish courtiers were unwilling to let their royal master confer with Ximenes, was the general report at that time, and it may have been true. Charles himself, however, was but a boy of sixteen, and, like a well-conditioned youth of that age, was greatly, if not entirely, under the guidance of those who had brought

say that justly they neither can nor ought to be given in *encomienda*, and make alternative suggestions which it seems to me have not fewer inconveniences than the one they condemn." The best way to save the Indians is to forbid their work in the mines, because they are physically weak and eat food giving little support. The frequent *repartimientos* are another cause of the great mortality because owners work the natives to get as much as possible out of them in a limited time.—*Col. de Doc. Ined. . . . de Real Archivo de Indias*, i, p. 264, etc.; xxxiv, p. 279.]

<sup>1</sup> GOMEZIUS, *de rebus gestis Ximenii*, lib. 7, p. 230.

See also PETER MARTYR's account of the Cardinal's health. He was "ill with a fever—now better, now worse—his physicians say that his days are few—he is more than octogenarian."—*Epist.* 598.

him up, especially of his governor, the Lord of Chièvres. If, therefore, the Prince had at this time said or done anything arguing thoughtlessness of the services of Ximenes, it would have been but a trifling matter of reproach to him. What he did do was this. Before seeing Ximenes he determined to go to Tordesillas to see his mother. Whether this was suggested by designing courtiers, or by his own heart, it certainly was not an ill-advised measure, or one that was likely to do him disservice with the Spanish people, who were always extremely jealous of the rights and claims of Juana. Charles then wrote a letter<sup>1</sup> to the Cardinal. In this letter the King begins by telling his Eminence, that he is going to Tordesillas (to see his mother) that he and the Cardinal should meet at Mojador, where after they had transacted together some matters of state, and he (Charles) had taken counsel of the Cardinal for arranging his private affairs and settling his whole household, the Cardinal should then consult his repose by returning home; "that he had undergone enough labour for the state, the reward for which, since no mortal could worthily repay it, he must expect from God; that he (Charles) would, as long as he lived, be grateful to him, and would go on in that observance towards him which sons well brought up are wont to pay the best of fathers." What effect this letter might have produced upon the Cardinal, we do not know. His honest biographer, Gomez, notwithstanding the temptation of a biographer to make a scenic ending for his hero, thus speaks out,—“These letters being received from Charles, Ximenes, plainly perceiving himself to be rejected

<sup>1</sup> This letter and the effect of it on Ximenes has been thus described. “He lamented the fate of his country, and foretold the calamities which it would suffer from the insolence, the rapaciousness, and ignorance of strangers. While his mind was agitated by these passions, he received a letter from the King, in which, after a few cold and formal expressions of regard, he was allowed to retire to his diocese, that, after a life of such continued labour, he might end his days in tranquillity. This message proved fatal to Ximenes. His haughty mind, it is probable, could not survive disgrace; perhaps his generous heart could not bear the prospect of the misfortunes ready to fall on his country. Whichever of these opinions we embrace, certain it is that he expired a few hours after reading the letter.”—ROBERTSON'S *Charles the Fifth*.

and repelled, was seized, as they say, with a fatal fever. But Abulensis, who writes of this thing to Lupus" (Lupus was of the Cardinal's household, then living, a friend of the author, who furnished him with a great part of the materials for the Cardinal's life) "says that Ximenes was attacked by the fever the evening preceding the receipt of these letters, and therefore they were not shown him, but were sent to the Council."<sup>1</sup> There is, therefore, good reason for affirming that he never saw the letter in question; nor need we look far, to account for the death of a man of eighty, who had undergone a most laborious life, and whose state of health had, for some time, been most critical. As well as we can judge, the Cardinal's feelings towards Charles were those of confidence in his gratitude: for a few hours before he died, he began to dictate a letter to Charles, in which he commended to the King his university, his monasteries and his household. This letter he was unable to sign.<sup>2</sup>

After he had received the last offices of his Church, and had been anointed, repeating to himself the psalm *In te Domine speravi*, "In thee, O Lord, have I trusted," he breathed forth his last.<sup>3</sup>

I have not thought it an unworthy digression (if anything affecting the character of those we have largely to do with in any history can be called a digression from it), to give, on the authority of his earliest biographer, the above account of the death of Ximenes. For Ximenes to have died of this letter would have been as unworthy a thing as for Charles to have written a letter which could wound so deeply a faithful public servant, and such an attached follower of the royal house.

To any of those who have been deeply interested in

<sup>1</sup> GOMECIUS, *de rebus gestis Ximenii*, lib. 7, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> "A little time before he died he commenced to dictate a letter to Charles, in which he humbly recommended to his favour his university and monasteries, built and endowed by himself, and his household; but his fingers becoming stiff and losing sensation he was not able to sign it."—GOMECIUS, *de rebus gestis Ximenii*, lib. 7, p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> [On 8th November 1517. He was Regent for twenty-two months.]

the history of the New World, and have been hoping that at last some great mind would look into the perplexed affairs there, and set them to rights, the loss of Ximenes seems irreparable. We feel that he was a man who might have remedied the evils in that new-found country. Throughout the whole of the arrangements for the Jeronimite mission, his conduct realises for the moment what the student of history, unversed in the difficulty of managing men, fancies might be done, and what he himself, poor student, would do, if he had the power. There are even kindly traits in it, which according to the common notion entertained of Ximenes, we should not have expected to meet. And, indeed, I doubt whether any transaction of his life elicits more of his character than this mission, which has now for the first time, I believe, been made known in full detail from the manuscript history of Las Casas. Like a certain great man, too, of our own times, the Cardinal seemed to appreciate the difficulty of government, and the necessity for it. Then he was "so clear in his great office." Peculation, unjust heed of relationship, and mean doings of all kinds, must have withered up in his presence. He was like a city on the margin of deep waters, such as Genoa, where no receding tide reveals anything that is mean, squalid, or unbecoming. Of a spirit as great as our own Chatham, but with more simplicity, he was the man to make a whole nation think after him. His subordinates could have relied on his unwavering support, and the pulsations of his constant mind would have been felt in the most distant regions of his action.

The force and influence of the Jeronimite mission perished with him; and we shall have to take up the next portion of this history under new auspices, and to find the very policy which he had wisely condemned, adopted by those who succeeded to his power, but not to his wisdom or his complete integrity.

If Ximenes had lived but a year or two longer, and Charles the Fifth had happily not listened to the prayers of his Spanish subjects, but stayed in Flanders, it is not improbable that a widely different fate would have attended the Indian and the negro race. On such

comparatively small events, humanly speaking, does the fate, not only of nations, but of races, turn ; as if they were nests of insects, which are destroyed or saved, as the husbandman happens to turn his attention to the right hand or the left, and thus, unheedingly, avoids, or crushes, whole communities.

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